

THE TEN GREATEST SUCCESSES OF THE CIVIL WAR

NORTH & SOUTH

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CHRISTMAS IN THE CONFEDERACY

The War Between
the Names



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Wisps of steam rose from the backs of the unsaddled horses on the cold moonlit evening of February 4, 1862. The countryside was covered with four inches of fresh snow and the waning moon was overhead as General Jackson returned from a long day's work to his headquarters at the Moore's home on Baddock Street. Waiting for Stonewall's return was an envoy on a special mission from the Governor of Virginia. It was Colonel Alexander Boteler's mission to try and convince General Jackson to withdraw his resignation from the Army of the Confederacy.

General Jackson's Romney Campaign in January had successfully driven the Federals from three counties of Northern Virginia, thus protecting Winchester from invasion. The difficulties and trials of that expedition also showed Jackson who he could count on during war time operations. To hold and protect this northern invasion route, General William W. Loring's command was posted in Romney and the South Branch valley. Other troops would guard Bath and Martinsburg while the Stonewall Brigade returned to Winchester. This action did not sit well with Loring and his officers who wanted to return to the relative comfort of Winchester. With the lack of discipline and complaints throughout Loring's command, morale plummeted. Bypassing the chain of command, Colonel William Taliaferro traveled to Richmond and, incredibly, gained audience with President Jefferson Davis to complain about General Jackson. On the morning of January 31st General Jackson received a letter from the Secretary of War directing him to withdraw Loring's command back to Winchester. Jackson's replied to the Secretary that his order would be promptly carried out. General Jackson concluded the communiqué with his resignation from the Army.

It didn't take long for Jackson's resignation to have an immediate effect in Richmond and Winchester. There was a flurry of activity in response to this turn of events. It seemed everyone was concerned and fearful if his resignation was accepted. Governor Letcher stepped into action on behalf of General Jackson, his old friend. The Confederate high command learned an important lesson on how to handle Generals in the field. Over the next two years Colonel Boteler would come to realize just how successful his mission had been, and how the course of military history would have changed had it not been for Stonewall's return.



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Stonewall's Return

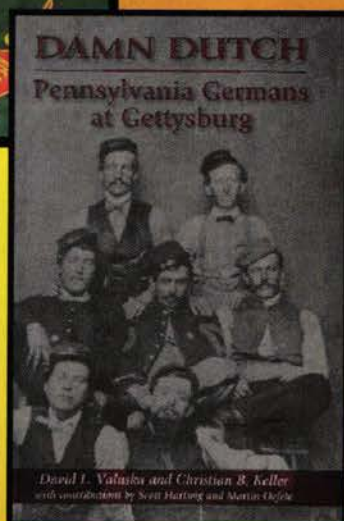
General Thomas J. Jackson's Headquarters
Winchester, Virginia – February 4, 1862

by

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THE IRISH & GERMANS IN THE CIVIL WAR



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NORTH & SOUTH

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In 1864 disaffected members of the Republican Party—who harbored sincere doubts about the president's management abilities, fretted about his use of presidential power, and questioned his commitment to ensuring equal civil and political rights for black Americans—made no fewer than three major efforts to deny Abraham Lincoln a second presidential term. Their failure was far from inevitable. —*Mark Grimsley*

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On July 4, 1863, the strategically vital city of Vicksburg, Mississippi, fell to Union forces. It was a stunning defeat for the Confederacy, one foreshadowed by two seemingly unrelated events, both of which occurred in 1862, that ensured that unity of command would not be realized by those responsible for the city's defense. —*Terrence J. Winschel*

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Editorial

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

In my top desk drawer, underneath a multitude of miscellaneous papers for which I was unable to find a proper home in the nearby filing cabinet, lies a smooth, ivory-colored cardboard envelope, no bigger than the average greeting card. Inside rests a glossy copy of a very old photograph—a tintype, to be precise—of fifteen men in military dress. Their uniforms are light in color, likely gray, and they are standing around two drums, one of which is massive. It is clear that these men are musicians of some kind, but obvious clues as to the identity of their group—and to the date on which the photograph was taken—are nowhere to be found.

Why is this photograph in my top desk drawer? Because one of these fifteen men is my lone Civil War ancestor, Samuel C. Terry, who served as a non-commissioned officer in the 3rd New Jersey Infantry. I am thrilled to possess it, as you might imagine. But there's a problem. I have absolutely no idea which of the men is my great-great-grandfather.

The photo was a gift from a generous distant relative about ten years ago, the original having passed down to him through his line of the Terry family. I learned at the time all he knew about it, which wasn't much—Samuel was in there somewhere. It's what he had been told by his family when he was given the original years before.

For a time, I thought I might be able to solve the mystery through research. I made some interesting finds over the course of a few years—like the fact that Samuel joined the 3rd New Jersey as a member of the “Cumberland Grays,” a militia company in his home county (and a possible reason for the color of the men's uniforms in the photo)—but came no closer to identifying Samuel. No luck either in comparing other old family photos in my possession to that of the “group of fifteen,” several of whom look like they could be Terrys.

I'm pretty much resigned to the fact that I'll never know which of the men in the photograph is my great-great-grandfather. And, frankly, it's a situation that could easily have been avoided if someone, way back when, would have thought to identify the men, including Samuel, for the benefit of future generations.

When one thinks of historic preservation, the association most often made is with the fight to protect hallowed ground from development or to save old buildings from demolition. These are the big fights, and they're vitally important. But there are smaller battles that occur every day, and most, I'm afraid, are lost. They are the struggles to preserve and properly identify family documents and artifacts, those treasured mementos that pass down from generation to generation. Time-worn items are discarded, photographs and papers mishandled, elders not asked to record the stories of their lives—and the family tales passed down to them.

These battles don't have to be lost, but action must be taken. Spend an afternoon rummaging through the attic; ask your parents or grandparents to help identify old family items. Keep a clear record of things for the benefit of your children and grandchildren. Need suggestions on how to protect what documents you have? Check out the superb web site of the Legacy Project, Andrew Carroll's wide-ranging effort to help folks preserve family war letters (www.WarLetters.com).

For me, such steps would have made a difference—between having a photograph of my great-great-grandfather and fourteen of his comrades, and one of fifteen military men, one of whom is reportedly my lone Civil War ancestor.

Terry Johnston



Crossfire

AMBUSH ON THE STONO

I would like to point out a few errors that mar Derek Smith's interesting article on the loss of the *Issac Smith* ("Ambush on the Stono," *North & South*, Vol 8, No. 5). Smith describes the *Smith* being armed with "a 30-pound Parrott gun in her bow and eight 8-inch Columbiads." The Columbiad was a gun developed for coastal defense and rarely mounted on U. S. Navy ships. The eight guns were VIII-inch Dahlgren smoothbores. Smith closes his article by stating that the captured ship, renamed *Stono*, was scuttled by the Confederates when Charleston was abandoned in 1865. But the *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships* reports that the *Stono* was refitted as a blockade runner and, while loaded with cotton, was wrecked on the breakwater near Fort Moultrie trying to run out of Charleston on June 5, 1863.



The article mentions the Confederates' use of the *Sumter* to resupply the artillery batteries that had ambushed the *Smith*. The *Sumter* was a shallow draft transport that did yeoman service until she was accidentally sunk by the guns of Fort Moultrie in August 1863. Unfortunately, the photo of the *Sumter* on page 67 is not the *Stono* River transport. It is a photo of the CSS *Sumter*, the first Confederate cruiser, which took eighteen prizes under the command of Raphael Semmes.

WE WELCOME YOUR COMMENTS

Letters are often edited for length so we can include as many as possible. Write "Crossfire" via email: crossfire@northandsouthmagazine.com or mail letters to NORTH & SOUTH, 33756 Black Mountain Road, Tollhouse, CA 93667.

Smith quotes the *Smith's* captain, who wrote that some of the crew "deserve special mention for their coolness and bravery." One such crewman was Landsman Richard Stout, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the loss of the *Smith*. The citation states, in part: "Carrying out his duties bravely through this action, STOUT was severely wounded and lost his right arm while returning the rebel fire."

—Steve Alvin, Oglesby, Illinois

DEREK SMITH RESPONDS:

I appreciate Mr. Alvin's interest in shedding more light on the life and death of the *Isaac Smith*.

The information that the *Smith* was armed with Columbiads came from two sources. The February 2, 1863, *Charleston Mercury* and volume 5 of *Confederate Military History* both list them as being part of the gunboat's armament. Volume 5 was written by Confederate brigadier general Ellison Capers, a Charlestonian.

Details about the destruction of the vessel remain somewhat clouded. Writing to U.S. secretary of the navy Gideon Welles on June 15, 1863, Admiral Samuel DuPont stated that a rebel vessel was sunk on the night of June 5 while trying to leave Charleston and that "there is reason to believe the steamer was the *Isaac Smith*" (ORN, Series 1, volume 14, p. 252). Elsewhere, the *Official Records* state that the *Smith* was destroyed by the rebels when Charleston was evacuated in February 1865 (ORN, Series 2, volume 1, p. 267). E. Milby Burton, in his excellent book *The Siege of Charleston, 1861-1865*, addresses this question, stating that she was apparently refloated by the rebels in 1863 and burned when the Confederates abandoned the city in 1865. I came across the Richard Stout information too late for inclusion in the article.

MEADE & SICKLES

After seeing [in "Gettysburg Point-Counterpoint," *North & South*, Vol. 8, No. 4] where General George Meade intended to put the III Corps (along the base of Cemetery Ridge, without occupying Little Round Top), I am convinced that Dan Sickles really did save the day [at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863]. Had Sickles gone where Meade told him to, Longstreet's attack would have punched through the swale that runs between the southern end of Cemetery Ridge and Little Round Top. With the Federals segregated from the round tops, the rebs could have occupied those eminences at will. That would have enabled them to domi-

nate the Taneytown Road and enfilade the Federal positions on Cemetery Ridge. Meade would have had no choice but to retreat. In the actual event, because Sickles' forward position kept the rebels away from the junction of Cemetery Ridge and the round tops, it was possible for the Federals to occupy Little Round Top when the need arose, and thus save the day.

In short, both Sickles' and Meade's plans for positioning the III Corps were defective, in that leaving the round tops unoccupied made neither line sustainable. However, events proved Sickles' plan the less defective of the two.

—John Braden, Fremont, Michigan

GAS ATTACK

A recent examination I made of the *Official Records* brought to light an item that I thought might interest readers of *North & South*. A document in Volume 36, part 3, pp. 888-889, reveals that General Robert E. Lee's chief of artillery, General William N. Pendleton, proposed using "suffocating" gas on Union troops. Pendleton made the suggestion on June 10, 1864, to Lieutenant Colonel Baldwin, who was chief of ordnance for the Army of Northern Virginia. The delivery system was to be shells fired by howitzers.

The Confederates lacked the sophisticated chemistry required to manufacture the gas, so the plan never came to fruition. It wasn't until World War I that the German chemical industry invented poison gas, which was first used at Ypres in 1915.

Below is a transcript of Pendleton's letter to Baldwin.

—Bryce A. Suderow, Washington, D.C.

HEADQUARTERS ARTILLERY CORPS, June 10, 1864.

Lieutenant-Colonel BALDWIN,
Chief of Ordnance, Army of Northern Virginia:

COLONEL: I saw noticed in a recent paper a stink-shell, and it seems to me such missiles might be made useful to some extent at least. We have a few howitzers, chiefly 12-pounders, which can be used somewhat as mortars. They can throw shells occasionally in or near the enemy's trenches. The question is whether the explosion can be combined with suffocating effect of certain offensive gases, or whether apart from explosion such gases may not be emitted from a continuously burning composition as to render the vicinity of [page 889 begins] each falling shell intolerable. It seems at least worth a trial. The close proximity of our lines and those of the enemy suggests also another agency. Should we at any time

advance for assault, hand-grenades might do important service in driving off the enemy as we approach his breast-works. Have we any made? If so, of what pattern, weight, &c., and how are they put up for transportation? If none are on hand would it not be well to have some prepared very soon?

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
W. N. PENDLETON,
Brigadier-General and Chief of Artillery

P. S.—Can you get for us two Napoleon guns to give to General Long in lieu of two which he recently got from General W. H. F. Lee's horse artillery (McGregor's battery) in exchange for two 3-inch rifles? General Long thinks the Napoleons he thus got (bronze) too much worn, served, and honeycombed to be properly serviceable in the field.

WHAT CAUSED THE CIVIL WAR?

Edward L. Ayers' article on the causes of the American Civil War ["What Caused the Civil War?" *North & South*, Vol. 8, No. 5] does a great disservice to the understanding of this topic. The author appears to have over-analyzed and split hairs with this subject, causing confusion and deniable consequences. Is the author trying to say that slavery was not the primary cause of American Civil War?

While there were many causes that started that war, almost all of them stem from the institution of slavery and its maintenance. Any knowledgeable high school history student can tell you that almost all the major political crises during the period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War dealt with the issue of slavery. Examples include the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Missouri Compromise, the admittance of Texas into the United States (provoking the Mexican War as well as leading to the creation of the state of Maine), the Dred Scott case, Bleeding Kansas, and so on. It seemed to have been a national obsession.

I often tell people that the American Civil War was fought on the issue of the federal government's right to limit and abolish slavery versus the rights of states to maintain and expand slavery. Slavery, like it or not, was the main instigator of a war that was long time coming. While Union soldiers didn't go to war to destroy slavery (to preserve the Union was their initial reason), Confederate soldiers went to war to defend their states' rights to maintain the institution of slavery. (Whether they acknowledge that or not is immaterial. German soldiers of World War II may have thought they were fighting for Germany, but in reality, they were fighting to maintain the holocaust.)

So that answer given in *The Simpsons* episode cited by Ayers is totally correct. It cut through the layers of lies, denials, and folksy

excuses that many people and historians like to make. To those who doubt this, just read the book *Apostles of Disunion* by Charles B. Dew, which explained why the southern states chose to secede after Lincoln's election. Another book, *Men of Secession and Civil War, 1859-1861* by James L. Abrahamson, also investigated this issue.

I also protest Ayers' assertion that "revisionist history" is a good thing. Tell that to David Irving, who lost his reputation as a respected historian when his revisionist views on the holocaust marked him as a racist and a neo-Nazi. History is based on facts. Sometimes these facts hurt, and people try to revise them to fit their comfort zone. Ayers seems to encourage that.

The institution, issue, and concept of slavery caused the Civil War. There were many side issues, but most related directly back to slavery. Sometimes in history we are blessed that the answer can be so simple. It's sad that some people can't accept that.

—Gerald Tamura, Anchorage, Alaska



What Caused the Civil War?



EDWARD L. AYERS RESPONDS:

I am in agreement with Mr. Tamura's political stance, and admire his passion, but I believe that unless we face up to the full evidence of the past we will never move forward on this issue.

Of course, as I say repeatedly and explicitly in the article, slavery is the key issue in the Civil War; the question is *how* slavery drove a reluctant nation to war and emancipation. Like the bureaucrat on *The Simpsons*, Mr. Tamura proudly proclaims himself uninterested in the actual complicated historical record and can only picture a fuller historical analysis as "splitting hairs." Mr. Tamura imagines that a com-

plex argument is somehow an evasion rather than a confrontation with the hardest truths about the Confederacy as well as the Union. We cannot afford to cut corners in our understanding. When we do, we leave the issue open to those who would truly evade the role of slavery in our national crisis.

LINCOLN NO HERO?

I subscribed to your publication as it seemed to be well written, well researched, and, in general, a more scholarly magazine than the usual available to the general public. However, the recent article on Lincoln ["Abraham Lincoln, American Hero," *N&S*, Vol. 8, No. 5] and the author's reply [Harold Hozler, in "Knapsack," *N&S*, Vol. 8, No. 6] were horrible. The reply itself was really what got me. He [Holzer] is obviously a liberal Yankee. First he indicates that it is beneath him to answer criticism and is doing so only at your request, then he goes into the usual liberal form of argument, which is to personally attack the person in disagreement and then to dance around the issues without ever refuting their concepts. Of note, he states that Lincoln must be taken in the context of his time, and then later takes him out of context when it is favorable to his point of view. The article itself was horrible and the typical reverent adoration that you get when this group of "scholars" discusses this particular subject. It is as if they are trying to make this piece of clay (and a politician at that) into a god.

I feel that real information is necessary at this time to assess this person and what he did to the U.S. Considering his production of one of the worst wars we have been in and his subsequent elimination of personal freedoms, a realistic discussion is necessary. My distaste for Lincoln began at birth, as I am in the South, but more realistically started on listening to a series of tapes on his political speeches. I found that it was impossible to do so with my son around, as he sounded just like David Duke. Your author makes much of the Emancipation Proclamation and Lincoln's desire to free slaves. But he never attempted to free a single slave in the U.S., as the proclamation only applied to the Confederacy. In fact, the original 13th Amendment would have ensured slavery to this day, as I am sure you know. And this was endorsed by Lincoln. He took cases as a lawyer to return runaway slaves. The author of the letter that was critical [of Holzer's article, Antony Lombardi, in "Knapsack," *N&S*, Vol. 8, No. 6] brought up a valid point. Lincoln was against slavery, yet favored his friends who hired people at a substandard wage and kept them in a virtual world of confinement (both adult and child).

Lincoln's atrocities not only include treatment of the Indians (which has never been

well covered) but also the type of war waged against his own citizens, both in the U.S. and the South (remember thirty to forty percent were pro-Union), which was as bad as Hitler and Stalin. Note that the Minnesota affair with the Sioux was lessened not by Lincoln's kindness but by international intervention.

A look at Lincoln's government shows one that was totally, completely corrupt. This has never been looked at as we would with other historical figures. Instead, Lincoln supporters only say it was not apparent that he benefited personally so he could not have been involved. I could make the same argument for Huey Long.

In short, to understand other monsters like Hitler, we must understand our own. To turn back the clock and regain our freedom, we must understand that it was lost, and how. A critical look at Lincoln is thus mandatory.

—David Caskey, MD
Shreveport, Louisiana

HAROLD HOLZER RESPONDS:

Is there no end to the biliousness—and astonishingly wild imaginations—of the intractable Lincoln haters? It makes me heartsick to be asked to write yet another reply to such a screed, this one truly going beyond the pale by comparing Abraham Lincoln to David Duke, Hitler, and Stalin! Can such diatribes really be taken seriously? Is it really responsible, or necessary, for a serious magazine to publish them? Finally, does it make sense for me to keep answering them? Perhaps one last time.

But I confess that I've run out of scholarly arguments and impassioned rhetoric in the face of such historical misinterpretation and unalloyed hatred. To paraphrase Lincoln, David Caskey's world will little note nor long remember what I say here...but in the interest only of claiming equal space for reason and sanity, I will offer apologies to all readers who thought my article—and my recent reply—"horrible," and concede that the piece was perhaps more impassioned, more opinionated, than my usual contributions. This is probably because it was adapted from a speech I gave for the National Endowment for the Humanities at Ford's Theatre in Washington—the place where Dr. Caskey and his ilk doubtless wish Lincoln had visited more often before April 14, 1865. As for its arguments, however, I retract not a word, and reject as unanswerable Dr. Caskey's latest variation on the "Lincoln killed America" theme. It is not "beneath me" to respond, as he fumes; I just don't think it makes sense to keep imposing reality checks on these wild (and growing wilder) allegations.

There is, of course, plenty of room to argue and discuss whether Lincoln overstepped his constitutional authority during wartime; how he expected to reconstruct the Union; how his own early racism blossomed into growing tolerance; how limited—and how effective—was his Emancipation Proclamation, to name a few controversial points we historians debate

all the time. But letters like Dr. Caskey's do not invite rational debate; they spew vile conspiracy theories and monstrous character assassination. Thank goodness they remain on the fringe of the ongoing historical scrutiny of this, and all, historical figures.

In the end, I feel almost presumptuous defending a man who has been praised by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King, and by all of his own White House successors, from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries. I have heard with my own ears—and discussed face to face—the great appreciation and reverence Presidents George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush hold for Abraham Lincoln. He has inspired them—and motivated them—to be as great as they can be for the country Lincoln saved, and the Constitution Lincoln purified of racism and exclusion. One can question the results of their presidencies, but not the undeniable non-partisan appeal of Lincoln's heroic presidency. Democrats and Republicans alike revere him.

To put it another way, Lincoln's gift keeps giving—setting an ideal for everyone who walks in his giant shoes, everyone awed by his writing, everyone moved by his personal sacrifice, and everyone blessed by his extraordinary contributions. Did Lincoln make "us" lose freedom? Only the freedom to enslave, subjugate, and destroy the Union. Not a bad legacy, to say the least. Not the last word, to be sure, but hopefully, the last I'll be called on to offer here and now. Hopefully, there are other writers out there who might express their own views, too. I'll be watching this space.

* * *

In his lengthy anti-Lincoln diatribe (in "Crossfire," *N&S*, Vol. 8, No. 6), Anthony Lomabardi makes the claim that in 1866 General William T. Sherman called a Navaho Indian reservation he visited a "concentration camp." Apart from the fact that conditions on an Indian reservation in 1866 are irrelevant in judging the character of Abraham Lincoln, such a statement by Sherman would have been prescient indeed. The term "concentration camp" was not coined until the Boer War, long after Sherman was dead and buried.

However, I guess when someone's neo-Confederate agenda calls for comparing Abraham Lincoln to the Nazis, facts do not matter!

—Dennis Middlebrooks
Brooklyn, New York

FREEDOM'S OTHER ARMY

After reading Steven H. Newton's fascinating article on resistance among blacks in the South ["African Americans Resist the Confederacy: Two Variations on a Theme," *N&S*, Vol. 8, No. 6], I am left with a faint unease. Whatever the merit of "emergence" as a new and possibly worthwhile (continued on page 89)

DO YOU KNOW?

1. He was George B. McClellan's vice presidential candidate in 1864.



2. This was the first major battle in which the United States Colored Troops took part.
3. This famous American poet served as a volunteer nurse in Washington D.C. during the war.
4. Name the only two men of Confederate president Jefferson Davis' cabinet to serve during the entire war.
5. This city, the South's fifth largest, was captured by Union forces in June 1862.
6. This officer was Confederate general John B. Hood's chief of artillery from September 1864 to February 1865.

TEASER: After resigning his commission, this former Union general was appointed by Abraham Lincoln to be the U. S. representative to the Vatican.

THE ANSWERS to questions 1-6 are on page 88. If you know the answer to the teaser question, send it to (note new *N&S* mailing address):

 **NORTH & SOUTH**
31718 Old Ranch Park Lane
Auberry, CA 93602.

The author of the correct answer drawn from the *N&S* hat will win a free book prize.

WE HAVE A WINNER!

The Teaser question in Volume 8, #5, was "This man was the Confederacy's second secretary of the treasury." The answer is George Trenholm (June 15, 1864, to April 27, 1865).

As usual, we received a number of correct responses. The name pulled from the *North & South* hat was that of Paul Thomas of Lexington, Kentucky. Paul receives a copy of James McPherson's *Antietam* as his book prize.



Albert A. Nofi

Knapsack A CIVIL WAR DIGEST

FROM THE GRAPEVINE

- Family tradition has it that on July 1, 1863, a portrait of Lieutenant Colonel David R.E. Winn fell from a wall in his house in Americus, Georgia, the face torn upon hitting a chair post, while at the same time, some hundreds of miles to the north, Winn himself was shot in the face at the head of the 4th Georgia at Gettysburg.
- By war's end one dollar in gold was worth about \$1.50 in Union greenbacks, and easily about \$60 in Confederate currency.
- On the eve of the war, the uniform of the Pioneer Rifles, a militia company from Rochester, New York, consisted of "a tall beaver hat, a green, swallow-tail coat with large cuffs and a high collar, and white pants."
- Commanding in Alaska in 1870, Brigadier General John C. Tidball, a distinguished horse artilleryman, was informed by the War Department that his accounts from the Civil War were short one axe shaft; dire consequences were threatened if he did not pony up sixteen cents.
- Resting on Mary Chestnut's verandah in Columbia, South Carolina, on October 11, 1864, Jefferson Davis was accosted by a troupe of small boys, who began shouting, "There's a man on Mrs. Chestnut's porch who looks just like Jeff Davis on a postage stamp." They made such a fuss that the president shortly went inside.
- Before the war, virtually all federal revenues were derived from customs duties, and seventy percent of those were collected in the port of New York.
- In 1839 Benjamin Butler, then a rising politician, joined the "Lowell City Guard" of Massachusetts, in which he served as an enlisted man for three years.

We make every effort to check the accuracy of anecdotes published in "Knapsack," but many were written down years after the event and in some cases are undoubtedly folk tales rather than genuine reminiscences.

➤ Incensed by the depredations committed by Confederate troops during Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania, on June 16, 1863, a group of irate citizens in Greencastle ambushed at gun point some rebel wagons loaded with "loot" and thereby liberated thirty to forty African-American women and children who were being carried off into slavery in Virginia.

SHORT ROUNDS Some Unsung Casualties of the War

It is well known that on September 17, 1862, Union and Confederate forces fought it out along Antietam Creek in western Maryland, one result of which was that some 5,000 troops were killed, both sides combined. But they weren't the only Americans to die violently that day. While Antietam was the bloodiest event of that late-summer day in 1862—and indeed in all of American history—the second bloodiest occurred about 185 miles to the northwest, in the Lawrenceville district of Pittsburgh.

Lawrenceville was the site of the Union's Allegheny Arsenal, a major munitions factory that employed 186 civilians, 156 of whom were women and girls, who worked at making .54 and .71 caliber musket cartridges and filling 10-pounder and 12-pounder cannon shells.

September 17 was payday at the arsenal, and the workers reported to the paymaster in teams throughout the day. At about 2:00 p.m. the workers from Room 14 lined up to draw their wages, a simple diversion from their daily routine that ultimately would save their lives. Just then an explosion tore through Building 1, the main arsenal structure. Some workers fled, while others, including the plant supervisor, Alexander McBride, rushed toward Building 1 even before the debris had settled. A second explosion soon followed, followed by a third, devastating still more of the arsenal, including Building 2. Altogether seventy-eight were known to have been killed, many of them burned or mangled beyond recognition; the actual death toll may well have been higher, as records were incom-

plete and some bodies likely were not recovered. Of the recovered dead, seventy-two were women and teenage girls, and six men and boys. Among those killed was Katie McBride, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the superintendent, who himself was injured by the second blast. Many of the victims were similarly related. Several mothers and fathers died with their daughters, and some sisters died together as well.

The victims of the explosion were buried nearby, mostly in Allegheny Cemetery, where their grave is marked by a monument that was erected in 1928 (which replaced an older marker). It bears the following inscription:



Peter Newark's Western Americana



"I have served my country, under the flag of the Union, for more than fifty years, and so long as God permits me to live, I will defend that flag with my sword, even if my native State assails it!" —Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, upon being asked to become commander of Virginia's military forces in April 1861.

Tread softly, this is consecrated dust, forty-five pure patriotic victims lie here. A sacrifice to freedom and civil liberty, a horrid memento of a most wicked rebellion. Patriots! these are patriots' graves, friends of humble, honest toil, these were your peers. Fervent affection kindled these hearts, honest industry employed these hands, widows' and orphans' tears have watered the ground. Female beauty and manhood's vigor commingle here. Identified by man, known by Him who is the resurrection and the life, to be made known and loved again when the morning cometh.

The blast at the Allegheny Arsenal was the worst industrial accident of the Civil War, but it was only one of several such explosions that occurred during the conflict. Among the others, the worst were:

- November 5, 1862: the Mississippi Arsenal, Jackson, Mississippi—at least fifty killed, and an unknown number injured.
- March 13, 1863: the Confederate States Laboratory, Brown's Island, in

the James River at Richmond, Virginia—about fifty dead, including several girls under fourteen, and about twenty-five injured.

- June 17, 1864: the United States Arsenal, Washington, D.C.—at least twenty-one dead and many injured.

There were a number of reasons for the high proportion of women and girls among munitions workers during the Civil War, both North and South. Most basic was the phenomenon of women moving into traditionally male positions during wartime, when large numbers of men are withdrawn from the job market to serve in the military. But there was also another reason. Before the advent of metallic casings, musket cartridges consisted of folded paper cylinders, about two inches in length, that enclosed the ball and powder. These were made by hand, and women and girls, who usually possessed smaller hands and greater dexterity than men, were preferred as workers.

Naturally, the work of a cartridge maker was dangerous. After the paper cartridges were folded, they had to be filled with powder and ball, and then closed by further folding. Sometimes they were secured with a light string (another task at which women were usually better than men). Other times they were fastened by being dipped into a pan of melted wax, a process that also provided some waterproofing. Of course, the wax to be used was kept liquid by a lamp or candle, which meant that there was an open flame in proximity to all that gunpowder. Although it was never proven, a wax burner was suspected of being the cause of the Mississippi Arsenal explosion.

As for the Allegheny Arsenal explosion, several weeks after the disaster, a coroner's jury concluded that it was the result of negligence by Colonel John Symington, commander of the arsenal, and his subordinates. The process of making ammunition resulted in a good deal of powder spilling onto the floors and into the road outside the arsenal. Although young boys had been hired to sweep the premises and the roadway carefully, with instructions to recycle any

usable powder and safely discard any that was spoiled (i.e., mixed with soil or horse droppings), supervision of their work had been careless, and particles of gunpowder had accumulated in the cracks between the stones and roadway outside the laboratory. An errant spark, possibly supplied by a horseshoe, or perhaps from the pick axe wielded by one of the men who were working on the paving that day, was most likely the culprit; several witnesses reported seeing flames racing across the ground toward a wagon loaded with powder, which ignited and blew up Building 1, in turn setting off the secondary explosions that spread the destruction to the arsenal's other principal structure. Despite this evidence, a later board of inquiry exonerated Symington and ruled that the cause of the explosion could not be determined.

The Brown's Island incident appears to have occurred when a worker, one Mary Ryan, tried to free a friction primer that had become stuck in a board by banging another board against it; the resulting explosion blew her clear of the main blast, and she lived long enough to describe what she had done, testimony that was corroborated by other victims. Supervision at this installation appears to have been particularly careless. In some rooms women making new cartridges were working side-by-side with others who were breaking up old or damaged cartridges and friction primers so as to recover the explosives for reprocessing. Even by the standards of the Civil War years, this was improper procedure.

The total number of workers killed in war-related industrial accidents during these years will never be known. But certainly the casualties among munitions workers were easily over two hundred, most of whom were women and girls.

"I Beg You to Remember This...."

In preparing for what would become the Overland Campaign in the spring of 1864, U.S. Grant decided to strengthen the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the James by stripping the defenses of Washington, Baltimore, and

Left: Women labor in a Northern ammunition factory.

Below: An 1865 view of Richmond's burned arsenal and the Confederate States Laboratory.



Library of Congress

other posts of their garrisons. In many cases the troops in question had been under arms for two years. These men were well trained and as seasoned as troops could be who had actually never engaged in combat. Replacing them in the defenses of Washington and other places were a combination of state militia units called out for ninety days and a number of new, short-service volunteer units, mostly four months' men.

The 166th Ohio Infantry was typical of the many short-service regiments raised for the campaign. It was organized at Camp Cleveland, Ohio, and mustered into federal service on May 13, 1864, departing two days later for Washington, where it was attached to the XXII Corps and performed garrison duty at a variety of forts. Although credited with service during Lieutenant General Jubal Early's raid on Washington on July 11-12, the regiment does not seem ever to have engaged Confederate troops. When it mustered out, on September 9, 1864, the 166th Ohio had lost thirty-nine enlisted men to disease. Given its record, one could say that the regiment had not performed any important service. But that's not the way Abraham Lincoln looked at it.

On August 22, 1864, the president addressed the regiment, one of several to which he offered his thanks at the time:

I suppose you are going home to see your families and friends. For the service you have done in this great struggle in which we are engaged I present you sincere thanks for myself and the country. I almost always feel inclined, when I happen to say anything to soldiers, to impress upon them in a few brief remarks the importance of success in this contest. It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember this, not merely for my sake, but for yours. I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has. It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have

enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright—not only for one, but for two or three years. The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.

PROFILE

Scientific American and the American Civil War

America's oldest continuously published magazine, *Scientific American*, has delivered opinion and news about developments in science and technology for 160 years. Founded as a weekly broadsheet in 1845 by Rufus Porter, the magazine attracted the attention of inventors and scientists, both famous (as a boy, Thomas Edison walked three miles each week to get his copy) and obscure, and now boasts more than a million readers around the globe. During the Civil War *Scientific American* played an important role, fostering and reporting on innovations that impacted the war on land and sea.

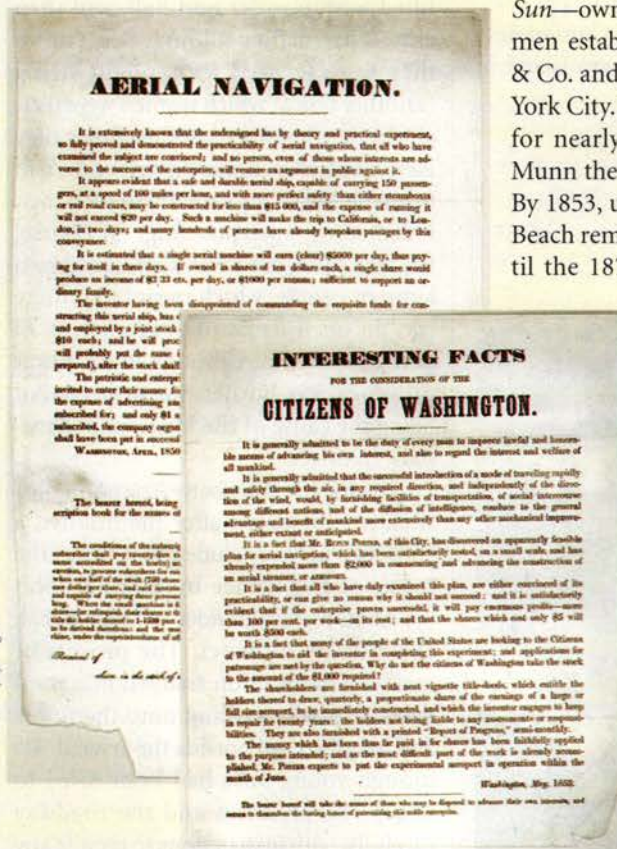
Born in 1792 in Boxford, Massachusetts, Rufus Porter was described by one biographer as a "Yankee da Vinci" with a "grasshopperish interest." After minimal formal schooling, Porter was by turns an apprentice shoemaker, itinerant musician and painter, schoolmaster, and prolific inventor (he sold his idea for a revolving rifle to Samuel Colt for \$100). In the 1840s Porter's interests turned to journalism, and he published his first issue of *Scientific American* on August 28, 1845, as a four-page weekly with the subtitle "The Advocate of Industry and Journal of Mechanical and Other Improvements." For two dollars a year, Porter delivered news of inventions (usually his own), essays on moral subjects, and even some music and poetry.

True to his restless personality, Porter became bored with the enterprise and sold the paper less than a year later to Alfred Ely Beach and Orson Desaix Munn. Munn was born in 1824 in Monson, Massachusetts, and attended school at the Monson Academy. He was managing a general store when Beach, a friend and Monson classmate, persuaded him to join in purchasing *Scientific American* from Porter for \$800 (a fire had forced Porter to move his printing operations to the offices of the New York Sun—owned by Beach's father). The men established the firm of Munn & Co. and secured an office in New York City. Porter stayed on as editor for nearly a year, while he taught Munn the intricacies of publishing. By 1853, under Munn's direction—Beach remained a silent partner until the 1870s—the onetime four-

page broadsheet with only a few hundred subscribers had grown to sixteen pages, was the leading journal of its kind, and boasted a circulation of 30,000.

(continued on page 91)

A prolific inventor, Rufus Porter became interested in aerial navigation in the 1820s. At left are two of his leaflets promoting air travel in 1850 (far left) and 1853.



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GRAPPLING WITH DEATH: THE UNION SECOND CORPS HOSPITAL AT GETTYSBURG —by Roland R. Maust, Morningside House, Inc., Dayton, Ohio, 2001. Illustrated, Index, 949 pages	\$60.00 - \$60.00 to ship
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THE TEN GREATEST SUCCESSSES OF THE CIVIL WAR

ED.: In our January 2005 issue (Vol. 8, No. 1) we ran an article in which a panel of historians discussed the greatest blunders (and blunderers) of the Civil War. The following piece is offered as a counterpart. In hopes of encouraging a variety of answers, participants were given no restrictions as to how to define a "success," and were able to choose any war-time event or decision—military, political, diplomatic, administrative, financial, or other—that they deemed worthy of inclusion. We asked only that they explained their decision-making process for all to see.

Taking part are: Steven H. Newton, professor of history at Delaware State University and author of *Lost for the Cause: The Confederate Army in 1864*; Keith Poulter, *North & South* publisher and founder; Gerald J. Prokopowicz, assistant professor of history at East Carolina University and author of *All For The Regiment: The Army of the Ohio, 1861-1862*; John Y. Simon, executive director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association and editor of the Grant papers; Craig L. Symonds, chief historian of the USS *Monitor* Center at The Mariners' Museum and author of *Decision at Sea: Five Naval Battles that Shaped American History* (Oxford, 2005); and Steven E. Woodworth, associate professor of history at Texas Christian University and author of *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865* (Knopf, 2005).

* * *

Craig Symonds: By implication, at least, choosing the greatest successes in any war implies a focus on military events. Accordingly, the following list is dominated by battles and campaigns. Nevertheless, the greatest successes of the war were those that brought long-term political and cultural change.

1. By far, the greatest triumph was the re-election of Abraham Lincoln in



Black Union soldiers mustered out at Little Rock, Arkansas, at war's end. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation had "opened up a significant manpower pool for the North," by allowing for the enlistment of African Americans.

November 1864. The outcome was critical to the Union cause, but the election was a success regardless of the outcome simply because it took place. Holding a national election in the midst of a civil war proved the resilience of American democracy, and answered the question Lincoln had posed at Gettysburg: whether "any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure." Indeed, Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg on this subject might well be considered one of the war's greatest successes in its own right.

2. Emancipation was the most important consequence of the Civil War, and it succeeded because of Lincoln's cautious and pragmatic approach: (1) waiting until Union troops had secured a victory; (2) issuing a preliminary declaration; and (3) casting the final announcement as a war measure rather than an unconstitutional usurpation. Of course emancipation was also the greatest disappointment of the war, since real freedom for black Americans had to wait more than a century before being realized.

3. The March to the Sea: Often cited as the campaign that inaugurated "total war," William T. Sherman's march from Atlanta to Savannah, and then north through the Carolinas, was a military and logistical triumph of the first order. As his Confederate opponent acknowledged, Sherman's march through the heart of the Confederacy proved that no such army had existed since the days of Caesar's legions.



Library of Congress

4. Jackson's Valley Campaign: The exploits of Jackson's "foot cavalry" in the Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1862 remain today one of the best examples in all military history of effective strategic leverage gained from mobility and surprise. Stonewall's several victories there were not only tactical successes (with one exception) but also, and more importantly, they constituted a strategic success by occupying a vastly superior enemy force.

5. Chancellorsville: Lee's famous willingness to take risks, born out of a pragmatic recognition that his was the numerically inferior force, was occasion-

ally costly to the Confederacy, but his audacity often paid great dividends. This was nowhere more evident than in his brilliant victory at Chancellorsville in May 1863, when he divided his army no less than three times to win an improbable, though costly, victory.

6. Joint Operations on the western rivers: Joint operations were extraordinarily difficult to execute in the nineteenth century when army-navy relations were far more competitive than cooperative. Nevertheless, the Union conquest of the Cumberland, Tennessee, and Mississippi Rivers was in large part a product of the ability of army and navy commanders to get along. This was particularly evident at Island Number 10 and at Vicksburg, where navy officers took their careers in their hands to run past Confederate batteries in order to transfer Union soldiers to more advantageous positions.

7. New Orleans: At least one author has argued that the day David Glasgow Farragut ran past the river forts below New Orleans and captured the crescent city was "The Day the War was Lost." If that is an exaggeration, it nevertheless points out the importance of capturing the South's only genuine city at an astonishingly modest cost to the victors.

8. USS *Monitor*: The CSS *Hunley* may have been more innovative than the USS *Monitor*, but the *Monitor* had a greater impact on the course of the naval war. This was mainly because the Union could, and did, produce large numbers of monitors whereas the *Hunley*, despite its success, remained one-of-a-kind.

9. CSS *Alabama*: The South's greatest naval success in the war was not *Hunley*, but the CSS *Alabama* and her sister ships, which ravaged Union commerce so efficiently that they had an impact on the war out of all proportion to either their numbers or their cost. Indeed, the story of the Confederate raiders marked a success not only of Confederate *guerre de course* warfare, but of the diplomatic skill of Confederate naval agent James Bulloch, who arranged for the ships in the first place and managed to fend off the protests of his Union counterparts long enough to get the ships to sea.

10. Missionary Ridge: As improbable in its way as Lee's triumph at Chancellorsville, this Union victory near Chattanooga was due less to the daring of the

commanders than the determination and common sense of the rank and file. Sent to occupy the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge as a diversion in support of Sherman's attack against Tunnel Hill, the men saw instinctively that this was not a good position. Subordinate officers took the bit in their teeth and led their men up Missionary Ridge to break the Confederate main line and send Braxton Bragg's army in headlong retreat.

Steven Newton: In many ways this is a more amorphous topic than those of the previous "top ten" lists. On the scale of an entire war, what constitutes "success"? I looked for major decisions and processes that had an impact on the war as a whole, which paradoxically could be very large things or the decision to appoint a single man to a certain position of responsibility. Not unrealistically, there are more Union successes on my list than Confederate successes, which seems reasonable given the war's outcome. Despite the fact that the editor relieved us of any requirement to create this list in rank order, I have done so, because it seemed somehow craven to side-step the final value judgment implied in the process.

1. The Emancipation Proclamation effectively changed the tenor and character of the war, tilting too many scales toward the Union for the Confederacy to overcome. Before Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation, it had been a war inflamed by slavery; after, it increasingly became a war against slavery.

2. The Union blockade, sieve-like though it was at times and places, nonetheless contributed mightily to the Confederacy's economic strangulation. Its success must be measured not only in the prizes taken, but also in terms of voyages never even attempted, as well as a constant reminder on the international stage of the rebellion's ultimate impotence.

3. Robert E. Lee's selection to command the Army of Northern Virginia represents the most successful single decision made by Jefferson Davis (or anyone else in the Confederacy) during the war. As Richard McMurry has observed, the rebels either had to win quickly or wage a protracted war over many years. Though ultimately unable to do either, Lee gave the South its best chance for independence.

4. Maybe I'm cheating, but the continued occurrence of wartime elections in both the Union and Confederacy (especially the 1864 federal presidential and North Carolina gubernatorial elections) proved that neither belligerent was willing to sacrifice the concept of representative democracy (no matter how far they might bend it), even during a major war. To me this is an American success rather than a Union or Confederate success.

5. The gradual broadening of Union military objectives to include Southern economic targets materially hastened the demise of the Confederacy, though in both a human and political sense this process represented tragedy rather than success.

6. Confederate manpower and economic mobilization proved successful enough to place the onus for victory or defeat squarely on the shoulders of the generals and their armies.

7. Union diplomacy, though at times overbearing, at times incompetent, and

always opportunistic, managed throughout the war to keep the bar for foreign intervention so high (essentially the destruction of a major Union army or the fall of Washington) as to be unattainable for the rebels. Federal diplomats also played an often ignored but major role in thwarting multiple Confederate attempts to construct a seagoing fleet abroad.

8. The last item having been stipulated, the Confederate effort to create a navy—virtually from the waterline—capable of defending its ports, challenging the blockade, and destroying Union commerce deserves to be considered a major strategic success.

9. The effective Union efforts to secure the border states by fair means or foul deprived the rebels of a defensible frontier, large reserves of manpower, and major economic resources. Had Kentucky, Missouri, and/or Maryland seceded when Virginia and that tier of "Upper South" states did so, the difficulty of putting down the rebellion would have increased exponentially.

10. Moving the Confederate capital from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia, has often been criticized, but it was the right strategic decision. Not

only did the transfer solidify Virginia's allegiance to the Confederacy (critical!), but for the next four years it also focused far too much Union attention and too many Federal resources into the one theater of war in which the rebels could materially offset them. Absent Richmond as Confederate capital, the main Union concentration of effort in the West would probably have overwhelmed the rebels in two years or less.

Gerald Prokopowicz: What are the ten greatest successes of the Civil War? The question requires immediate acknowledgment of the fact that the war cost over 600,000 lives, and almost anything that we might term "successful" about it has to be viewed within that context. Military successes, in particular, are not the kind that most of us would care to experience. As Wellington observed, "nothing except a battle lost can be half as melancholy as a battle won."

With that caveat, I have chosen ten events that represented success in the sense that (1) they brought about the results desired by the people responsible for them; and (2) these results (in all but one case) significantly affected the course of the war or its aftermath.

Left: Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. "The exploits of Jackson's 'foot cavalry' [below] in the Shenandoah Valley in the spring of 1862 remain today one of the best examples in all military history of effective strategic leverage gained from mobility and surprise."



Battles and Leaders of the Civil War

1. The Emancipation Proclamation. (Category: All around winner.) As a military decree, it opened up a significant manpower pool for the North; as a foreign relations gesture, it ended any realistic hope of foreign recognition for the Confederacy; as a domestic political stroke, it harnessed the growing willingness of Northerners to do what was necessary to win; and as a moral act, even with all its limitations, it was still (as Lincoln said to Francis Carpenter in 1865) "the central act of my administration, and the great act of the nineteenth century."



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Lincoln created a situation that left Jefferson Davis with two poor options, of which he chose by far the worse in starting the war. The results brought a divided North together overnight.

4. Acts of the 37th Congress (Category: Political acts with political results.) Among others, the Homestead Act opened the West, the Pacific Railroad Act led to the first transcontinental railroad, and the Morrill Land Grant Act spread institutions of higher education across the country. Together they transformed the nation.

5. Legal Tender Act (Category: Economic success.) A successful combination of taxation, borrowing, and printing paper money put the Northern war effort on a sound economic footing, something the Confederacy never achieved.

Left: Major General William T. Sherman. "Though criticized by some latter-day historians, Sherman's campaign in north Georgia was a masterpiece of maneuver against a highly skillful, if not particularly aggressive, opponent." Below: Sherman's troops leave a burning Atlanta on November 16, 1864.



Frank & Marie T. Wood Print Collection

2. Robert E. Lee's farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia. (Category: Most successful public statement.) At Appomattox Lee told his men that they had done all they could, and should now go home. Had Lee instead chosen to obey Jefferson Davis' call for continued resistance, he might have set a course for decades of guerilla warfare that would have made reunion all but impossible.

Runner-up: Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, which had more long term significance but less immediate practical impact.

3. Relief mission to Fort Sumter (Category: Political act with military results.) By sending non-military supplies to the besieged garrison in April 1861,

6. Jackson's Valley Campaign (Category: Military act with political results.) Stonewall bamboozled Lincoln and his generals into taking their eyes (and reinforcements) away from Richmond, perhaps saving the Confederate capital and keeping the war from ending in 1862.

7. Jackson and Lee at Chancellorsville (Category: Success in battle.) Their masterful tactics did not destroy the Army of the Potomac, but they did save the Army of Northern Virginia from a tight spot. More important, they created a legend of superiority that sustained the army's morale for two more years, and that lives on today.

8. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign (Category: Successful campaign.) Al-

though some scholars have challenged the significance of Vicksburg's fall, there is no question that Grant achieved his goal. The campaign demonstrates his doggedness, imperturbability, and imagination.

First runner up: Grant's Henry and Donelson campaign. A close second, based on Grant's use of combined arms and the campaign's significant strategic results.

Second runner up: William S. Rosecrans' Tullahoma Campaign. He captured half of Tennessee without a battle, but history (like the War Department) has chosen to "overlook so great an event because it is not written in letters of blood," just as Rosy feared.

9. Sherman's March to the Sea (Category: Successful strategic movement.) While the armies in the East fought over

the same ground for four years, the war was decided in the West. Sherman intended to demoralize the South by demonstrating that the government could send its troops anywhere it wanted, and he succeeded in this so completely as to effectively end the war.

10. Battle of Richmond, Kentucky (Category: Lopsided success in battle of no other great significance.) On August 30, 1862, some 6,500 rebels led by Edmund Kirby Smith defeated a like-sized Union force, inflicting 4,900 casualties (including 4,000 prisoners) while losing fewer than a thousand men themselves.

Runner up: Missionary Ridge. If the war should have taught one tactical les-

son, it was not to attack uphill and head on against an entrenched enemy. Unexpectedly, the Army of the Cumberland not only succeeded in doing so at Missionary Ridge, but completely routed a larger Confederate force as well, almost capturing its much-maligned commander Braxton Bragg.

Steven Woodworth: The first thing I want to say is that it is very difficult to identify ten events as the ten greatest successes of the war, as though no other accomplishments equaled them. In fact, it is so hard that I am not going to attempt it. I will state at the outset that my list is not exhaustive. Rather it consists of the ten greatest successes that stand out the most in my thinking on the war. My colleagues will no doubt list other events that were equally or more successful.

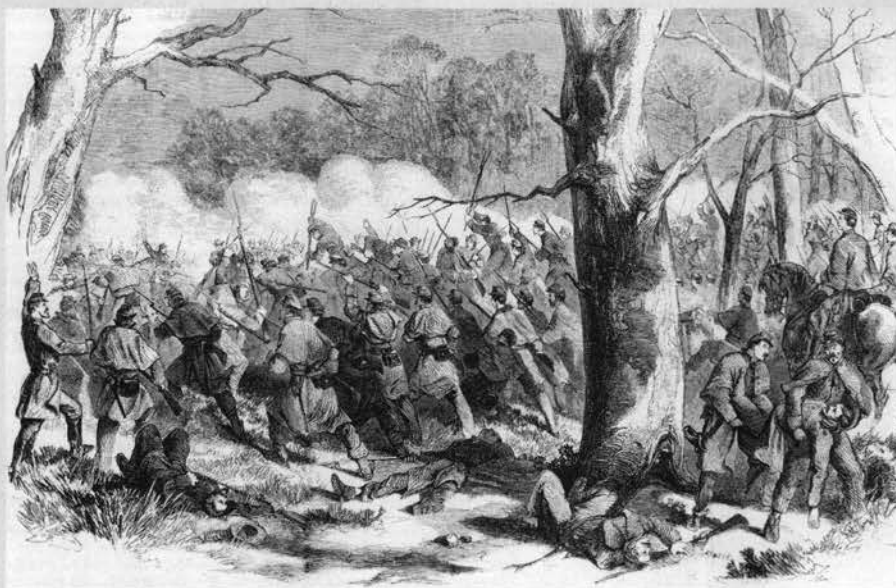
My criteria for these successes is simply that they were accomplishments that reflected great skill, wisdom, and/or fortitude, and that they contributed in very large ways to the advancement of the achiever's cause, even if that cause did not ultimately prevail. In cases in which the opposition blundered so signally as virtually to hand success to the victor, I have discounted the achievement somewhat. Thus I have omitted Lee's victory at Fredericksburg as well as Thomas' at Nashville. Some will, I am sure, differ strenuously on these points. It can always be debated whether the opponent was a fool or was merely made to appear one by the victor's brilliance.

1. Grant's Vicksburg Campaign, April-July 1863. From his daring crossing of the river, to the lightning campaign through the interior of Mississippi, to the final tenacious siege of the Confederate fortress, Grant's Vicksburg Campaign ranks as the boldest and most brilliant undertaking of the war, and one that struck a near-fatal blow to the Confederacy.

2. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign, May-September 1864. Though criticized by some latter-day historians, Sherman's campaign in north Georgia was a masterpiece of maneuver against a highly skillful, if not particularly aggressive, opponent (Joseph Johnston). Though he may not have accomplished all that hindsight imagines he could have, what Sherman did was nevertheless extremely

impressive and helped nail the coffin shut on the Confederacy.

3. Grant's capture of Forts Henry and Donelson, February 1862. Grant found little opportunity to display his operational virtuosity in the campaign for the forts, but he showed the initiative, drive, and dogged perseverance that set him far apart from many other Civil War generals nearly as clever, and in doing so struck a blow that crippled the Confederacy almost from the outset.



In the campaign for Forts Henry and Donelson, Ulysses S. Grant "showed the initiative, drive, and dogged perseverance that set him far apart from many other Civil War generals nearly as clever, and in doing so struck a blow that crippled the Confederacy almost from the outset." Above: Men of the 2nd Iowa charge the rebel entrenchments at Fort Donelson on the afternoon of February 15, 1862.

4. Jackson's Valley Campaign, March-June 1862. The fast-moving, hard-hitting operations in the Shenandoah Valley during the spring of 1862 were the closest the Confederacy came to the brilliance of Grant's Vicksburg Campaign. Without Jackson's achievement it is hard to see how Richmond's fall could have been prevented that summer. Had Jackson's opponent been more competent, I might have rated this even higher.

5. Sheridan's Valley Campaign, September-October 1864. This was a dazzling success that I would have rated higher save for the weakness of the opposition. Still Sheridan showed fire and skill in using up his opponent and removing the Shenandoah Valley as one of the chief props of Confederate resistance in Virginia.

6. Sherman's Georgia and Carolina Campaigns, November 1864-April 1865. This might be a surprise, since Sherman did not face a major army until the latter

phases, and then not a very big one. Still the task he undertook was difficult and risky enough that Grant at first doubted he could get through Georgia, and Johnston, his opponent, was confident he could not get through the Carolina low country. Sherman handled the march with great skill, and in doing so not only eviscerated the Confederate war economy but showed that the slaveholders' republic was no longer able to protect its territory.

7. Lee's Second Manassas Campaign, August 1862. This was an operational masterpiece that brought the Confederacy to the brink of foreign recognition.

8. Farragut's capture of New Orleans, May 1862. In the best aggressive tradition of the United States Navy, Farragut led his fleet through its fiery passage of the forts to capture the largest city of the South. Though it may not have been, as some have claimed, the doom of the Confederacy in a single night, the fall of New Orleans was another of those events that hamstringing the rebel cause near the beginning of the war and from which the Confederacy never fully recovered.

9. Grant's Chattanooga Campaign, October-November 1863. Opening the Cracker Line and then engineering the spectacular defeat of Bragg showed all of the brilliance and initiative that made Grant the greatest commander of the war.

10. Lee's victory in the Seven Days, June-July 1862. Though it was not the

Cannae that Lee hoped and planned, the campaign nevertheless succeeded in driving the Union army away from Richmond and securing the Confederate capital for what turned out to be almost another three years. Had Lee's opponent been made of sterner stuff, I would have rated this accomplishment higher.

My next choice is the quality of government on the Union side. In a country only partially urbanized and industrialized, managerial skills of a high order were cultivated to inventory resources and apply them to the business of war. Financial policies were put in place to provide the sinews of war without un-

I'm going to include one battle in my list: New Orleans. Of limited economic significance, the loss of the Confederacy's second largest industrial center and gateway to the Gulf was nevertheless of symbolic importance, and marked the beginning of the systematic geographical reduction of Secession.

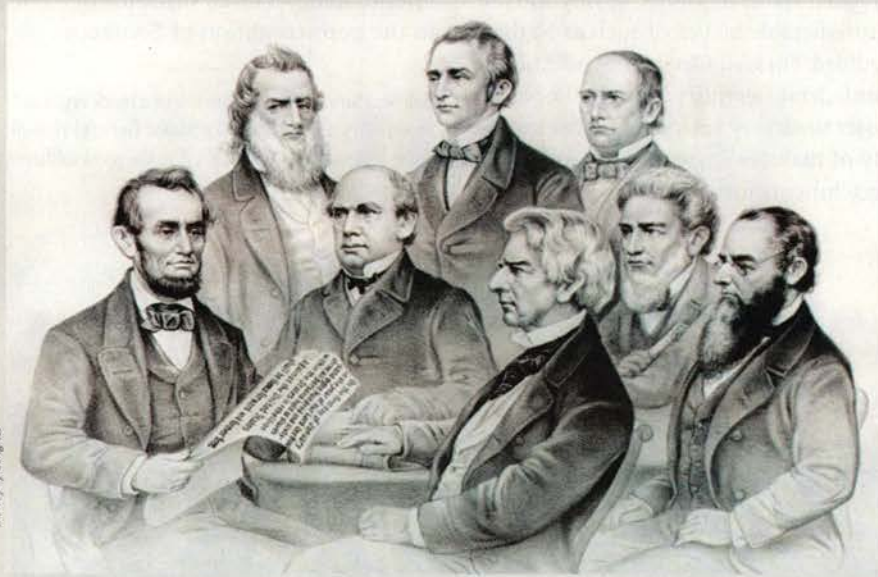
Next, my second individual: U.S. Grant. The victor of Forts Henry and Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Overland Campaign, Petersburg, and Appomattox made a contribution to victory second only to that of the inhabitant of the White House. Without the contribution of America's greatest soldier, the outcome of the war might well have been different.

Another contribution to victory was the employment of black soldiers and sailors—the figure of 198,000 being generally accepted. The Confederate failure to use its colored population as a military resource—albeit for obvious reasons—stands in marked contrast.

That's six Union successes. What of the Confederates? Two factors rate inclusion. Robert E. Lee was the only general produced by the Confederacy who successfully commanded a major independent army (one other Southerner did so, but "Pap" Thomas remained loyal to the Union). Without Lee secession would probably have been beaten down in two years rather than four. Which segues nicely into the other Confederate success, the creation of a government, a nation, and a military force virtually from scratch—a political entity that maintained itself against violent assault for four bloody years. If the hallmark of Union success was organization, that of the Confederacy was improvisation.

Which brings me to my two post-Civil War successes. Or perhaps they should be called "successes." In 1865 the U.S.A. faced a beaten but unreconstructed Southern white minority. Thirty years later much of the sectional animosity had faded: restoration of the Union—the original Union war aim—was an accomplished fact. But this came at a price—the abandonment for the next one hundred years of the colored minority.

The Confederate South too had its postwar "success." Black codes and Jim Crow laws relegated its black minority to the bottom rungs of the social order. Thus the secessionists, defeated on the battle-



Library of Congress

"The Emancipation Proclamation effectively changed the tenor and character of the war, tilting too many scales toward the Union for the Confederacy to overcome. Before Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation, it had been a war inflamed by slavery; after, it increasingly became a war against slavery." Above: Lincoln and his cabinet adopt the proclamation.

Keith Poulter: When I first put pen to paper for this contribution, I swiftly compiled a list of twenty significant Civil War successes. Not wishing to omit any, I condensed them down to ten by combining related factors. Naturally—given the outcome of the war—Union successes predominate. And two refer to the continuing struggle *after* the bugles had fallen silent.

The first Union success—both chronologically and in terms of its significance—was the election of Abraham Lincoln. Shrewd and subtle, this intellectual giant's every move (okay, almost every move!) reveals him as a major Union asset. The crafting of his cabinet, the outmaneuvering of his opponent at Fort Sumter, his step-by-step approach to emancipation, all mark him as a master politician. Comparisons with the hapless chief executive in Richmond only paint Lincoln's contribution to victory in bolder colors.

duly distorting or cramping the economy at large. Railroads were harnessed to the war effort, and a debilitating blockade imposed upon the enemy. Foreign relations were so managed as to keep sympathy for the Confederate cause from escalating into active support. New and improved weapons were developed and a national draft implemented.

And evolution was not confined to government and industry. The Union army and navy too showed considerable development over the four years of conflict. From a base of just forty-two ships in commission (and only twelve of them in American waters) at the outset, the U.S. Navy rose to an 1865 strength of six hundred and seventy-one vessels that dominated both fresh and salt water. The Union cavalry, initially ill-organized and with no clear mission, became by war's end an incomparable, virtually unstoppable force, well-led and well-armed, equally at home on horseback and on foot. The Union artillery too came into its own, outmatching its opponents from Gettysburg on. Only in the infantry was development more spotty: as late as mid-1864 its tactics remained an ersatz mixture of Napoleonic and proto-modern field craft.

field, achieved *their* prime war aim—the preservation of the existing racial hierarchy. But this too came at a high price, economic backwardness and yet more generations raised in an environment of institutionalized bigotry.

John Simon: The greatest successes of the Civil War should perhaps be limited to those that had some bearing on the outcome of the conflict, or might have had bearing if they shaped the future.

Success began with the presidential leadership of Abraham Lincoln. Immediately after taking office, he confronted the decision of whether to hold Fort Sumter. Steering adroitly through various possibilities, he emerged with a determination to permit war to begin at Fort Sumter—if the South chose to fire the first shot. The Confederates thereby lost support in crucial border states, lengthening odds against their eventual independence.

Second, Lincoln's timing of the Emancipation Proclamation. To maintain maximum loyalty through a "border state policy," Lincoln gave every indication to slaveholders of respect for constitutional guarantees for slavery where protected by state law. Only through persistence in rebellion could states lose sovereignty. After exhausting every effort to end slavery through compensation and colonization, and also finding support in Congress and the public that would sustain such a policy, Lincoln moved against the institution that he had long hated, and in a manner that strengthened the Union war effort.

Emancipation included the enlistment of black troops. Earlier efforts to arm blacks had met Lincoln's opposition; now he enthusiastically backed the organization of a new wing to an army in need of enhancement. Some blacks who enlisted earliest encountered discrimination in pay and promotion or demeaning camp and garrison duty. Yet they prevailed, and as the war lengthened, so did Northern reliance on black troops.

An estimated 100,000 white troops from states that had seceded fought for the North. While occasional Northern defectors could be found in Confederate ranks, nothing like a massive infusion of troops balanced Southern Unionists. Taken together with former slaves who enlisted in the U. S. Army, the

South battled the South as well as the North.

The South could never match Union success in bringing blacks to battle but did have important forces dedicated to keeping the Federal army off-balance, ranging from the outright criminality of William C. Quantrill to the irregular status of John S. Mosby and the unpredictable tactics of such as Nathan Bedford Forrest. Occupying additional Confederate territory brought the North closer to victory yet increased the necessity of maintaining garrisons and other detachments for control.



signed to Rosecrans for inadvertently opening a gap in his line and then overreacting when Confederates broke through. On the other hand, the Army of Tennessee had been joined by troops under General James Longstreet detached from the Army of Northern Virginia. The South had the advantage of interior lines yet rarely made use of it due to the poor condition of Southern rail-

Below: Thomas Nast engraving of a black regiment in action. Confederates like Major General Howell Cobb believed that "if slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong."

Ulysses S. Grant's victory at Fort Donelson achieved the first major Union victory of the Civil War, the capture of some 15,000 troops, the destruction of the entire Confederate defense line across Kentucky, and the capture of a Confederate state capital (Nashville).

The Confederate victory at Chancellorsville in May 1863 demonstrated the military prowess of Robert E. Lee at its height. Bold tactics, including dividing a force merely half as large as that of his opponent, revealed Lee's audacity and the confidence that he conveyed to his troops.

The western counterpart of Chancellorsville came at Chickamauga in the fall of the same year. Confederate forces pushed from Tennessee by Major General William S. Rosecrans and apparently destined to retreat indefinitely after giving up Chattanooga without a battle, suddenly turned on the North to inflict a stinging blow. Much blame may be as-

signed to Rosecrans for inadvertently opening a gap in his line and then overreacting when Confederates broke through. On the other hand, the Army of Tennessee had been joined by troops under General James Longstreet detached from the Army of Northern Virginia. The South had the advantage of interior lines yet rarely made use of it due to the poor condition of Southern rail-

roads and, to a lesser extent, an unwillingness to send troops from one department to another.

Only once did Confederates challenge Unionists for control of the seas, and the appearance of the *Virginia* (*Merrimac*) in coastal waters threatened even Washington with an overwhelming attack. The rapid development of the *Monitor* more than met the threat.

The triumph of American diplomacy as conducted by Lincoln, Secretary of State William H. Seward, and Minister to Great Britain Charles Francis Adams insured federal triumph. At the outset of the Civil War, conscious that cotton was the chief export crop of the United States and of vital importance to European manufacturers, Confederates anticipated foreign support for their war effort and eventual independence. Northern diplomats frustrated such hopes repeatedly, and when an ill-advised seizure of two Confederate emissaries on

the *Trent* threatened to imperil federal relations with Great Britain, Lincoln's government followed a successful policy of conciliation. Early in his administration, Lincoln had effectively urged upon Seward a policy of "one war at a time."

New Orleans in April 1862 and of Vicksburg in July 1863 were milestones in Union victory / Confederate defeat.

There is a lot of agreement here even if we call these events by different names. But there is some disagreement, too, and

expansion over four years from forty-two ships to 671, a fifteen-hundred-percent increase.

I acknowledge the lopsided outcome of the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky (cited by Gerry Prokopowicz at # 10), but given its modest strategic impact, I would not include it on the list. Similarly, despite John Simon's argument for Chickamauga as a Confederate success, I would argue that the Confederacy gained no meaningful strategic advantage from its "victory" there and that Grant's breaking the "siege" of Chattanooga made Chickamauga meaningless.

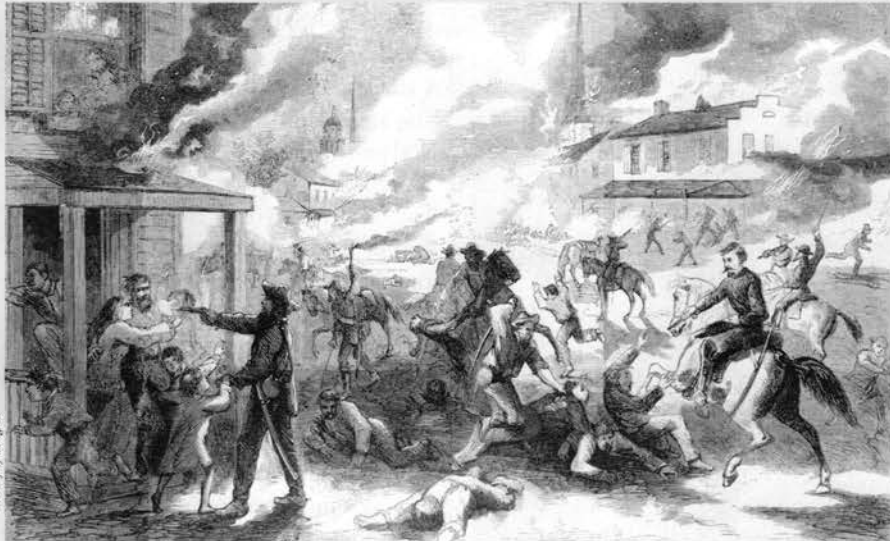
Finally, Keith Poulter reminds us that "success" comes in many forms and depends on one's perspectives. Conservatives in the postwar South no doubt believed that their defeat of Radical Reconstruction by means of the KKK, Black Codes, and the so-called "Mississippi Plan" was their greatest success, even if it marked a defeat for the nation.

Steven Newton: I find that I took a different road than everyone else. To me, "greatest successes" does not necessarily imply "military campaigns." Even so, the Emancipation Proclamation finished highly on most lists, and Lincoln's reelection also scored well. (I am not sure the "great success" part was necessarily Lincoln's victory, but the simple assumption of Americans on both sides that the democratic process had to continue even in the midst of a total war.)

Looking at military campaigns, I find what John Simon is wont to characterize as "the usual suspects": Vicksburg, Chancellorsville, Jackson's Valley Campaign, and the March to the Sea. I've never been sure why Vicksburg merited such praise. Grant's supposed tenacity actually wasted many months, his stab inland faced only mediocre opposition, and—Lincoln's famous comment notwithstanding—over seventy-five percent of Pemberton's paroled army did see service throughout the rest of the war. Chancellorsville was a tactical marvel, but it remains a barren victory that in no way improved Lee's strategic situation. Jackson's countermarches up and down the Shenandoah were thrilling, but without McClellan's turgid lunge toward Richmond and the Lincoln-Stanton amateur command tandem, they could not have had a decisive effect on the campaign. A



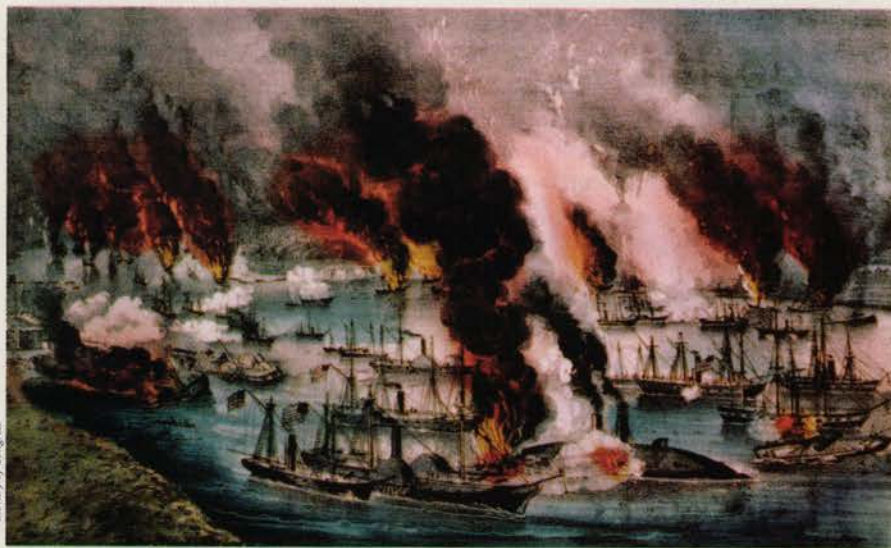
Left to right: John S. Mosby, William C. Quantrill, and Nathan Bedford Forrest. "The South . . . did have important forces dedicated to keeping the Federal army off-balance, ranging from the outright criminality of William C. Quantrill to the irregular status of John S. Mosby and the unpredictable tactics of such as Nathan Bedford Forrest."



The destruction of the city of Lawrence, Kansas, and the massacre of its inhabitants by rebel guerrillas, August 21, 1863. "Had Lee instead chosen to obey Jefferson Davis' call for continued resistance [after the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia], he might have set a course for decades of guerilla warfare that would have made reunion all but impossible."

Craig Symonds: Here are some things we all agree on—or mostly agree upon: (1) One great advantage of the Union was the strength and resilience of its government, starting with Lincoln himself but including its foreign diplomacy and its domestic policies; (2) The most transformative event of the war was the emergence of emancipation as a war objective; (3) A great advantage of the South was the Lee-Jackson team, which wrought tactical successes in the Shenandoah Valley and at Chancellorsville; (4) The Union team of Grant and Sherman fashioned their own brand of successful war—persistent, destructive, morale-crushing—that ushered in modern warfare; (5) On the western rivers, the fall of

in the hope of provoking a conversation, let me take issue with a few of my colleagues. I am glad to see Steve Newton touting the importance of the navy in the war (the blockade is his #2), but it does surprise me that he also cites the success of the Confederate navy (#8) which, with a few exceptions, had little impact on the war. Stephen Mallory was an excellent navy secretary, but he lacked almost all the raw materials necessary to construct and maintain an effective navy. John Simon, too, cites the success of the *Merrimac*, but notes correctly that its potential was checked by the timely arrival of the USS *Monitor*. Far more impressive—to me—than Confederate naval mobilization was the Union naval



"In the best aggressive tradition of the United States Navy," Commodore David G. Farragut "led his fleet through its fiery passage of the forts to capture the largest city of the South"—New Orleans. Above: Farragut's fleet passes the Confederate forts on the Mississippi on April 24, 1862, destroying the rebel river fleet in the process. Federal forces entered New Orleans the following day.



"The CSS *Hunley* may have been more innovative than the USS *Monitor*, but the *Monitor* had a greater impact on the course of the naval war." Above: The March 9, 1862, battle between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* at Hampton Roads, Virginia.

much stronger case can be made for Sherman's marches, which had distinct political as well as military consequences.

What I draw from these (potentially heretical) observations is the conclusion that the most famous campaigns generally took place when an excellent general faced substandard opposition. Sorry, but I'd rather offer the entire Overland Campaign if we're going to talk about great military successes against the best that the enemy had to offer, or even the Army of the Potomac's highly underrated defensive stand at Gettysburg. If

pure strategic impact is the criterion of choice, how about the Butler-Farragut capture of New Orleans? That one stroke permanently crippled rebel defensive operations in the Gulf, and it was arguably the loss of the Crescent City rather than Vicksburg that economically isolated the Trans-Mississippi from the rest of the Confederacy.

Having made these arguments, I can't quit the field without one last shot against the dominance of military history in the panel's paradigm of "greatest successes." That was certainly the way the

veterans preferred to recall the conflict, but I think it is becoming increasingly clear that the "military war" was only one of several crucial aspects to the struggle, and perhaps not the decisive one.

Gerald Prokopowicz: While we have no unanimity as to what constitutes a success, I too am struck by the remarkable degree of agreement among these lists, especially in regard to military events. My comments on each:

Craig Symonds. This list tilts toward naval successes, not surprisingly. It's hard to argue with the inclusion of the *Monitor*, for its effect not only on the war but on naval architecture and tactics up to today. Where I included the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky, as my example of the biggest bang for the buck, I would have to say that Craig's choice of the *Alabama* is better. For a small investment, Confederate commerce raiders occupied the attention of much of the U.S. Navy and permanently damaged the American merchant marine.

Steven Newton. I may have been craven in failing to rank my choices, but I did designate the Emancipation Proclamation as the single greatest success, and so does Steven. I'm persuaded by his (and Craig's) inclusion of the 1864 election, for the reasons they give. On the other hand, I don't see the relocation of the Confederate capital to Richmond as the "right strategic decision," or indeed any strategic decision at all. It was a domestic political choice, not a clever deployment of bait to distract Union armies from the unprotected western vitals of the Confederacy. Since the Union's capital would have remained on Virginia's border in any case, it seems likely that federal military effort would still have been concentrated in the East.

Steven Woodworth. This list includes only military events, a rational self-imposed limitation. I'd very much like to see what non-military successes he would include.

Keith Poulter. Clearly the greatest success among the panelists is Keith's compression of twenty items into a list of ten! While we have many entries in common, I will highlight the capture of New Orleans, which made this list and two others, but not mine. I agree that the fall of the Confederacy's largest city and seaport should by all rights have been a

turning point, but the fact was that the rest of the South seemingly shrugged off its loss and continued fighting for three more years. The South's agricultural economy was able to survive the early capture of major cities like Memphis, Nashville, and New Orleans; perhaps the unique cultural identity of the latter reduced the symbolic pain of its loss as well.

John Simon. Many of these entries appear on my list, but one that does not is the CSS *Merrimac*. If I were to choose one contestant from the Battle of Hampton Roads, I would have to go with Craig Symonds and say that the *Monitor* represented the greater success.

Steven Woodworth: The wide range of responses by my colleagues points up the vagueness of the question, "What were the ten greatest successes of the Civil War?" Of course, my colleagues are generally correct in their selections, and all two dozen or so of the items named are definitely among the ten greatest successes of the Civil War. In addition to those items, we should not neglect the splendid wheat crops in the North, the achievements of northern industry, the production of western gold and silver mines, or any of the scores of other successes. I chose military events because they decided the war. Certainly the political and economic developments were also significant. I would take issue only with the inclusion of the Homestead Act, the Pacific Railroad Act, and the Morrill Land Grant Act in any list of successes. The good that followed them would have happened anyway, and on a sound free-market basis. They brought much evil in the form of non-viable farms, shoddy-built and economically unsound railroads, political corruption, and government-controlled education. They may have played a role in some of the country but not for the better. I also think it is going a little too far to say that African Americans were not free between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, even if they did occupy a sort of twilight between the status of slaves and that of free men. We can say that the glass was half empty or half full, but we really ought not to say that a half-full glass is all empty.

Beyond that, I will not take issue with any of my colleagues' statements. All of us are correct.



The White House Museum Collection



Keith Poulter: Plenty of variety in our responses—around forty different (though sometimes overlapping) claimants for top ten success status. Two of us plumped almost exclusively for military events, two for non-military events, and two for a mixed bag. As Steve Woodworth remarked, in all likelihood we all can acknowledge the validity of most items on one another's lists; I certainly do. I will therefore confine my comments to the few suggestions that I find less than convincing.

First, I will dare to take issue with Craig Symonds on naval affairs, and suggest that the Confederate commerce raid-

"The Union team of Grant and Sherman fashioned their own brand of successful war—persistent, destructive, morale-crushing—that ushered in modern warfare." Above: George P. A. Healey's 1868 painting titled "The Peacemakers" depicts a conference between Sherman, Grant, Lincoln, and Admiral David Dixon Porter.

"A great advantage of the South was the Lee-Jackson team, which wrought tactical successes in the Shenandoah Valley and at Chancellorsville."

Left: "Last Meeting Between General Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant General 'Stonewall' Jackson" on the morning of May 2, 1863. Courtesy of the R. W. Norton Art Gallery, Shreveport, Louisiana.

ers (and Bulloch's supporting role) do not warrant inclusion—for while the raiders performed well, they were never capable of being more than an expensive nuisance. The diversion of men and resources they necessitated was never such, nor could it ever have been such, as to fatally weaken the Union war effort. In similar vein I would argue against Steve Newton's inclusion of the Confederacy's attempt to create a navy. Its program of ironclad construction in particular, as John Clark argued in *North & South*, Volume 5, Number 5, was a significant waste of vital resources for little return. And while Steve's points about moving the capital to Richmond are well taken, the perceived necessity of holding the city did rob the Confederacy, in the latter stages of the

war, of flexible deployment. (I'm not objecting to this one, just deflating it slightly.)

In Gerry Prokopowicz's list I am uncertain about the significance of Lee's farewell address. How many heard it directly? How many heard it indirectly, and by what means? I readily admit I don't know; perhaps Gerry can enlighten me. As for Richmond, Kentucky, I simply question the category that secures it a place on his list. And those who read my sidebar to Ron Furqueron's "A Fight or a Footrace" in *North & South*, Volume 1, Number 2, will know that I regard Rosecrans' Tullahoma Campaign as at most a partial success—he intended to *destroy* his Confederate opponent, and with better deployment might have done so.

Which brings me to Steve Woodworth's list. Here the only nit I have to pick is with Sheridan's Valley Campaign. *Losing* the campaign would certainly have been significant, perhaps bringing the siege of Petersburg to an end. But I'm not sure what strategic impact Sheridan's victory had, beyond that which simply holding Early's men in the Valley would have had. I'm not belittling Sheridan's achievement, simply questioning its inclusion on a list of top ten successes.

And lastly John Simon. I have just one bone to pick with John (makes a change from nits). Chickamauga was certainly a major, albeit fluky, Confederate victory. But it led only to the strategic dead-end of the siege of Chattanooga. If this could be put down to Bragg's ineptness, we could say that the battle was of major significance but its potential results were wasted. But I'm not sure this was the case. If, given a reasonably competent Union response, the Confederates could neither capture Chattanooga nor bypass its garrison, what price victory at Chickamauga? A victory that leaves the victor with nowhere to go is not a candidate for "top ten" success. Mind you, I would be fascinated to hear what Bragg could have, or should have, done other than sit on the top of a hill watching the boys in blue.

John Simon: At the close of the Civil War Robert E. Lee attributed Union victory to "overwhelming numbers and resources." Those who recently surveyed

the "successes" of the conflict paid little attention to those numbers and resources yet found an overwhelming balance of factors favoring the North. Did the North possess capacities for achieving victory beyond those of the South?

In his message to Congress in December 1862, President Abraham Lincoln proposed a constitutional amendment under which the federal government would compensate any state emancipating slaves before 1900 and also appropriate money "for colonizing free colored persons, with their own consent, at any place or places without the United States." For Lincoln, "the dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

However forcefully supporting this plan, Lincoln eventually turned to other means to save the Union. Success often depended upon ingenuity, flexibility, and

"Joint operations were extraordinarily difficult to execute in the nineteenth century when army-navy relations were far more competitive than cooperative. Nevertheless ... at Island Number 10 and at Vicksburg, ... navy officers took their careers in their hands to run past Confederate batteries in order to transfer Union soldiers to more advantageous positions." Below: Union soldiers are taken by barges to Battery No. 1, one of several Confederate fortified points outlying Island No. 10, on a raid intended to weaken the rebel defenses surrounding the island.



audacity. Only Lincoln noted that vital step: to "disenthral ourselves."

Much of the Civil War was fought by soldiers educated at the same school, familiar with the same tactics and veterans of a pre-war army that emphasized discipline over creativity. Breaking away from stodgy and conventional thought proved difficult. Thus when Ulysses S. Grant had finally crossed the Mississippi River in his lengthy campaign against Vicksburg, then turned east to the state capital at Jackson to rout Joseph E. Johnston's reinforcing army before turning toward Vicksburg, his disenthralled audacity was breathtaking.

Both Northern and Southern leaders entered the conflict with ideas about the military potential of black men that inhibited their enlistment. One year after proposing colonization of freedmen, Lincoln was ready to accept their presence in his army. As for Southern enlistments, Howell Cobb stated that "if slaves will make good soldiers, our whole theory of slavery is wrong." Indeed it was,

but Confederate resistance continued until Lee urged his government to "decide whether slavery shall be extinguished by our enemies and the slaves be used against us, or use them ourselves." The Confederacy, already doomed, moved so slowly and cautiously toward black enlistment that the policy remained basically unrealized when Richmond fell, enthralled to a theory of slavery.

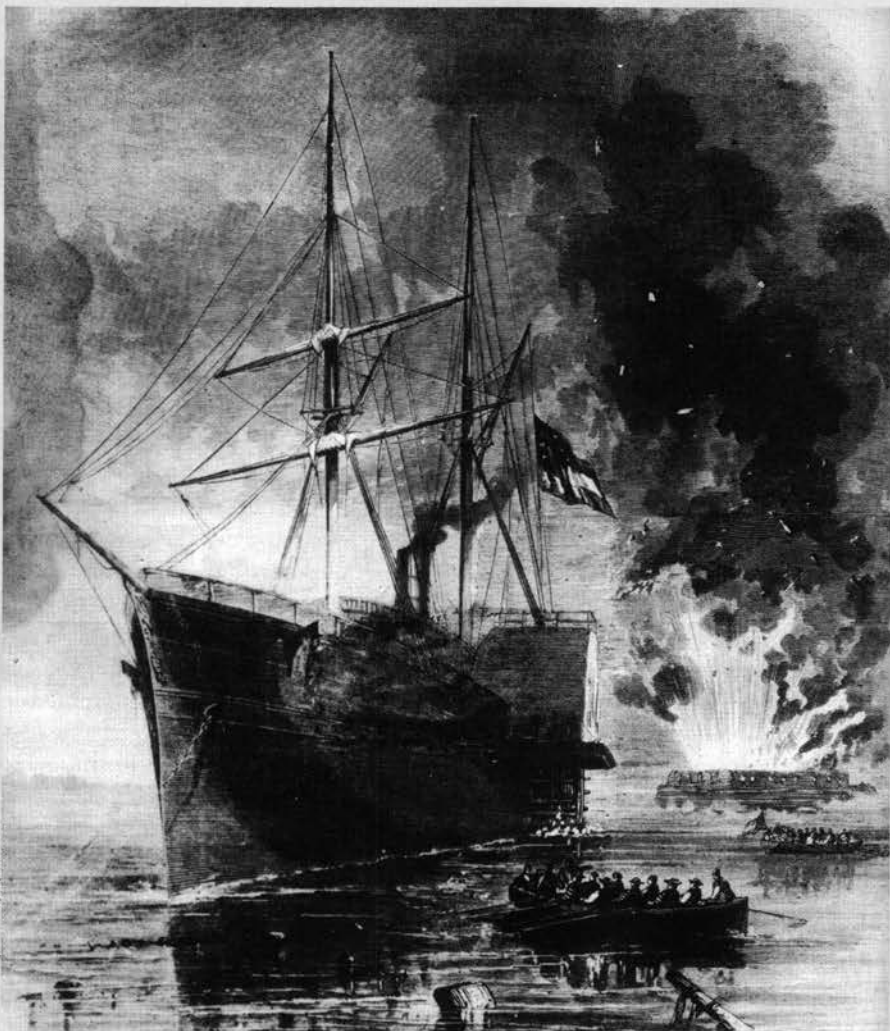
Craig Symonds: I am much taken with John Simon's notion that the greatest successes of the war involved men who were willing to employ "disenthralled audacity." Whether this involved daring tactics (Lee dividing his forces at Chancellorsville), strategic innovation (Grant at Vicksburg; Sherman's March), or creative and even revolutionary approaches to a previously insoluble social problem (Lincoln and slavery), those who succeeded most were those who were willing to break the conventional paradigm. Well said.

I will take issue with Keith about the impact of the Confederate raiders. He

suggests they were no more than an "expensive nuisance." True enough. But in the end, could not much the same be said for Jackson's rampage in the Valley, or Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania, or any other military effort by the Confederates? After all, none of those efforts led to final victory. But unlike the transient successes of Jackson and Lee, the rebel raiders affected not only US-UK diplomatic relations both during and after the war, they had long-term economic consequences on the United States and its trading partners. For very little initial investment of money or manpower, the rebel raiders provoked a precipitous decline in the American carrying trade (what in 1940 George W. Dalzell called a "flight from the flag") that continued for a hundred years and more. Today, only a tiny fraction of America's imports arrive in American-registered shipping, and although this cannot be pinned exclusively on Raphael Semmes, he and his fellow raiders precipitated it. That is having a truly historic impact.

Steven Newton: To Gerry I have to raise the question of whether or not success necessarily has to be intentional. I freely admit that nobody from Jefferson Davis on down could have foreseen what followed after the selection of Richmond as the capital. The motivations for the move were political (bind Virginia more closely to the new nation) and practical (Montgomery lacked both the size and communications to serve as an effective nexus). The results, however, were that troops from all across the Confederacy reinforced Virginia, throwing the most effective defensive barrier that could have been erected around the only legitimate industrial center the country possessed, sitting in the midst (as Richard McMurry has pointed out) of the best-integrated rail network in the Confederacy. That this had the effect of drawing extra Federal attention to the eastern theatre of war is indisputable. Even advocates of the "western

"For a small investment, Confederate commerce raiders occupied the attention of much of the U.S. Navy and permanently damaged the American merchant marine." Left: The rebel raider *Nashville*, the first Confederate warship to arrive in European waters, entering Southampton harbor on November 21, 1861, is depicted running the blockade at Beaufort, North Carolina.



thesis" of Union victory had to admit that without the stalemate in Virginia for three years all those victories in the West would have been anti-climactic.

To Craig I would suggest that the ultimate failure of the Confederate navy does not necessarily equate with lack of success. With respect to Wilmington, Charleston, and Mobile, rebel ironclads certainly played a major role in keeping those ports open—just by existing. By 1864, in a purely logistical sense, Wilmington was more important to the Army of Northern Virginia than the Shenandoah Valley. "The Burning" cannot be offered as the proximate cause of Richmond's fall, but a case can be made for the loss of Wilmington.

Certainly it is vital to incorporate social, cultural, political, economic and other factors into any meaningful interpretation of the war, but after all it is still a war we are discussing. I am willing to side with the veterans who recalled their experiences primarily in military terms, and humbly disagree that it is desirable to reduce the course of military events to one of the lesser narratives of the war.

Finally, in the face of overwhelming opposition to my mention of the battle of Richmond, Kentucky, I can only repeat that I offered it as an example of purely tactical success, and freely concede that it had no impact on the war's outcome.

we're left with is the bald assertion that Grant's accomplishment was unimpressive because Grant accomplished it. Someone could respond to the points I've made here by asserting that I can't know for certain that Midwestern morale would have suffered if Vicksburg had not fallen or that Pemberton would have been well regarded as a general if he had defeated Grant in the interior of Mississippi—and he would be right. We can't know the certainty of any of our counterfactual assumptions. That is why our discussion of which successes were more significant than others—when many indisputably major successes have been put forward—often amounts to talking past each other. With the exceptions I pointed out in this and my previous comments, I agree that all the events mentioned by my colleagues were important successes.

Keith Poulter: I'm going to pick up on just two points. First, Steve Woodworth's assertion that "military events decided the war." Surely, as Steve Newton says, it was a combination of many factors that determined the outcome. Military factors certainly, but also political, social, economic, and diplomatic. To take just one example, had a less astute president alienated the border states, the Confederacy might well have won its independence.

Second, Steve Newton's heretical opinion concerning the Vicksburg Campaign. Grant's tenacity we are told really was a matter of "wasting many months." Recoiling after the loss of his supply base at Holly Springs (December 20, 1862), Grant reached the Mississippi north of Vicksburg on January 28, 1863. He spent the next eight-and-a-half weeks attempting to bypass the city's defenses by creating routes through the swamplands north of the city or by redirecting the Mississippi. None of these attempts was successful, but that was not foreseeable beforehand. Grant then determined to have the navy run the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg while his army marched down the Louisiana shore—at that time largely under floodwater and lacking at the best of times adequate roads. From March 31 to May 18 the campaign was one of unprecedented mobility, apart from a few days in early May while the Union army accumulated supplies and awaited reinforcements.



Library of Congress

"The capture of Vicksburg merited praise because it shortened the length of the rebellion."

Above: Confederate soldiers in Vicksburg surrender as Grant and staff look on from horseback.

Gerald Prokopowicz: The panel's apparent unanimity collapses as soon as we get away from military events. For example, Steven Woodworth challenges my inclusion of the Morrill Act because it contributed to the "evil" of public education, whereas I consider public education a positive good. That's a disagreement we can't resolve in this forum.

Steven Newton bemoans the dominance of military history in a discussion of the war's successes. Most historians have in fact long since disenthralled themselves from the predominantly military approach that once prevailed; my list, for example, included only five military events. But for many in academia, even that is five too many. I know of a professor who was a finalist for a position teaching Civil War history at a major university, but was turned down by the hiring committee because his research was "too Civil War."

Steven Woodworth: Once again the broad range of answers shows how many angles are available for approaching a question of this sort. I agree with much, but not all, of what my colleagues have said, but I think there is little objective basis for arguing which is the greatest among several great successes. I do have to disagree with Steve Newton when he posits that Vicksburg was relatively unimportant, something I believe he can do at least in part because he ignores the morale of the Midwestern states, which would have been very negatively impacted by a different outcome. He also denigrates Grant's achievement in the campaign through the interior of Mississippi because he takes as a given the post-campaign value of Pemberton's generalship. Yet had the campaign ended in Union defeat, Pemberton would be celebrated today as a highly competent general. Taking that into account, what

Only after two fruitless assaults did Grant settle down to a forty-nine-day siege of the Confederate "Gibraltar." So my question to Steve Newton is: which were the "many wasted months?"

John Simon: If Steve Newton is unable to understand "why Vicksburg merited such praise," let him consult Major General Henry W. Halleck, who congratulated Ulysses S. Grant by exclaiming that in "boldness of plan, rapidity of execution, and brilliancy of results, these operations will compare most favorably with those of Napoleon about Ulm." When only specialists remember "Napoleon about Ulm," the Vicksburg Campaign remains a strategic model for the U.S. Army. President Abraham Lincoln wrote that he had wanted Grant to run the Vicksburg batteries, as he did, then join Major General Nathaniel Banks at Port Hudson. Lincoln wrote to Grant that "I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right, and I was wrong." Grant captured 37,000 Confederates, 172 cannon, and 60,000 rifles, and rebel ordnance chief Josiah Gorgas moaned that the "Confederacy totters to its destruction." Some paroled

prisoners served again as Confederate soldiers, but not all of them, and of those who served, many were properly exchanged for captured Union troops. The capture of Vicksburg merited praise because it shortened the length of the rebellion.

Steve Newton points out that many famous campaigns occur "when an excellent general faced substandard opposition." If true to some extent, Grant's substandard opponent in Mississippi would be John C. Pemberton, not Joseph E. Johnston, and Grant's brilliance enhanced Pemberton's achievement of a miserable reputation. Must we revisit the lost cause concept that a substandard James Longstreet cheated Robert E. Lee of victory at Gettysburg? On other fields, Lee made many Northern opponents appear substandard. Grant at Vicksburg set the standard for military achievement.

Steven Newton: That Grant kept his soldiers engaged throughout the winter and spring of 1863 is perhaps laudable, but we have to measure success by results. Nothing accomplished during that period (including the oft-cited "pinning" of Confederate forces near Vicksburg) jus-

tified taking the best Union army off the board for six months.

Gerald Prokopowicz: In response to Keith's query about the audience for Lee's Farewell Order, I don't know if anyone can say exactly how many men heard it read in April 1865. My larger point was that Robert E. Lee, by his words and his behavior then and later, did a great thing in encouraging his followers to accept defeat instead of turning to guerilla resistance that could have made reconciliation impossible.

ED.: Unfortunately, that will have to be the last word. Thanks to all of our participants for another lively discussion. As with those in past issues, several intriguing questions regarding the war have been raised—about the strategic importance of Jackson's and Sheridan's respective campaigns in the Shenandoah Valley, the options available to Bragg after Chickamauga, and perhaps even the relative significance of the eastern and western theatres of action—each of which could serve as the basis for a future article in *North & South*. We'll see what we can do to bring them to you—stay tuned....

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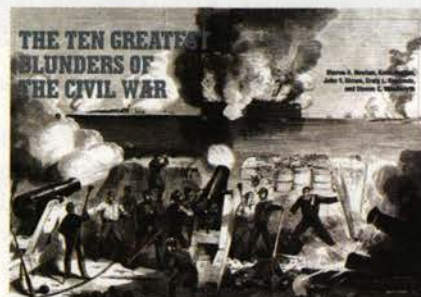
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Volume 8, Number 1

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A panel of historians discusses the many wrong turns taken by the Union and Confederacy. —Steven H. Newton, Keith Poulter, John Y. Simon, Craig L. Symonds, and Steven E. Woodworth



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"WILLIAM C. OATES AND THE DEATH OF GENERAL ELON FARNSWORTH" —Glenn W. Lafantasia

"GENERAL MEADE AND THE SECOND BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG" —Stephen W. Sears

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PRESERVATION ALERT

GETTYSBURG'S LAST GREAT FRONTIER



View of the Thomas farm, ground currently slated for dense development, and Hospital Hill, the location of Camp Letterman.

THE 145-ACRE DANIEL LADY FARM

—the last great frontier of the Gettysburg battlefield to be explored, understood, and incorporated with regularity into the story of the epic July 1863 clash between the armies of Robert E. Lee and George Gordon Meade—is now under serious threat. High-density development is planned along the York Road, which runs one-quarter mile northeast of the farm, to include approximately two hundred fifty homes, 1,600 town houses, high-rise hotels, and a major discount chain store. Though development in this area must be expected to a degree—Gettysburg remains an extremely popular destination, and the York Road is one of the few thoroughfares in town equipped to meet the community's expanding needs—the Daniel Lady farm is of great historical importance, and every effort must be made to protect it.

If one had to make the case that properties north and south of Hanover Road, immediately to the east of Gettysburg, comprised some of the most important sites relating to the battle, the facts would be readily available. Locations in this area, such as the Daniel Lady farm, do not attract the greatest number of visitors, but they arguably should. That they do not is in part due to the fact that they cross-section with areas of private property. But the main reason is that these sites, and their significance, are simply not known by a great number of the battlefield's visitors.

What makes these sites so important is their location—positioned between the extreme right of the Army of the Potomac's line and the far left flank of the Army of Northern Virginia during the battle. Because much of the land in this

area is outside of the park's official boundaries, it is presumed by many to be less important; yet veterans themselves lobbied unsuccessfully for larger tracts in the area to be included in the 1895 legislation that established Gettysburg National Military Park. They knew well its significance.

The glue that holds together much of this area, which we might call Gettysburg National Military Park-East, is the 145-acre tract straddling the Hanover Road, known as the Daniel Lady farm. It is owned and operated by the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association (GBPA), the oldest battlefield preservation organization affiliated with Gettysburg in operation. In December 2004 the GBPA held a ceremony to mark the successful restoration of the Daniel Lady barn roof, which now serves as a reminder that the area is being actively defended.

The Daniel Lady farm must be kept intact by all who hold preservation important. Although the details of what happened there during the battle are fuzzy to some, the area is significant. For instance, the farm was the destination of Union general Alpheus Williams' First Division, XII Corps' flank march on July 1, which made contact with two brigades of Major General Jubal Early's division of Lieutenant General Richard Ewell's corps at a critical moment of the battle. The skirmishing that broke out between Williams' and Early's men at about 4:20 p.m. directly northeast of the Lady barn arguably spared the XI Corps and saved the Cemetery Hill position for the Union army on the battle's first day.

The following day, July 2, General George G. Meade assembled 10,000 soldiers from the XII and V Corps immediately east of Wolf's Hill for a proposed "decisive attack" across the Lady farm to turn the Confederate flank. U.S. Regulars formed lines of battle, fired artillery, and advanced 1,000 skirmishers toward the 2nd and 4th Virginia of the "Stonewall Brigade" within a few hundred yards of the Hanover Road. Meade's proposed offensive across the Lady farm, aimed at seizing

Hospital and Benner's hills for artillery positions, eventually fizzled out. However, his preoccupation with the plan largely explains the unsupervised advance of Major General Daniel Sickles to the Peach Orchard.

The Daniel Lady farm forms part of the eastern slope of Benner's Hill (to the south of Hanover Road) and Hospital Hill (to the north), together one of four primary artillery platforms that Robert E. Lee used to bring converging fire on Cemetery Hill, the key to the Union position. Additionally, the two hills were, along with Seminary Ridge, vital observation points that Lee's army used to monitor Union movements at Gettysburg. The Lady farm also represents the original position of Confederate major general Edward "Allegheeny" Johnson's 6,000-man division, which bivouacked along Lady Run (located north of Hanover Road and the Lady farm buildings) and launched its assault against Culp's Hill from the farm.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the fact that the Lady farm is located only a few hundred yards from the ground on which Camp Letterman was established. The massive field hospital cared for a capacity of 1,200 soldiers on a

daily basis, and likely depended on Lady Run as a supplemental water source.

Sadly, the current plans for development along the York Road cannot be stopped. However, they can be controlled. A \$500,000 challenge grant has been put forth for easement, archeological surveys, and ground-penetrating radar to probe potential grave sites located on the farm. This grant needs to be matched, and soon, as comprehensive plans for rezoning and development of the township, especially in the Lady farm area, are slated to be implemented by January 2006. Unless an easement can be purchased to form a buffer, rezoning means the Lady farm will be tightly wrapped and engulfed by urban sprawl.

To learn more about the current threat facing the Daniel Lady farm, or to contribute to its preservation, please contact Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association (GBPA) president Kathi Schue: phone: 717-566-3331; mailing address: GBPA, P.O. Box 4087, Gettysburg, PA, 17325; e-mail: Gettysburg@pahouse.net.

—Contributed by Troy Harman

Below: The Daniel Lady farm barn undergoing restoration in 2004. The barn's beams and rafters still bear scars from artillery.

Right top: A crane sets the new main cupola on the roof of the barn on December 22, 2004. Right center: View of the west side of the barn, with all three cupolas in place.

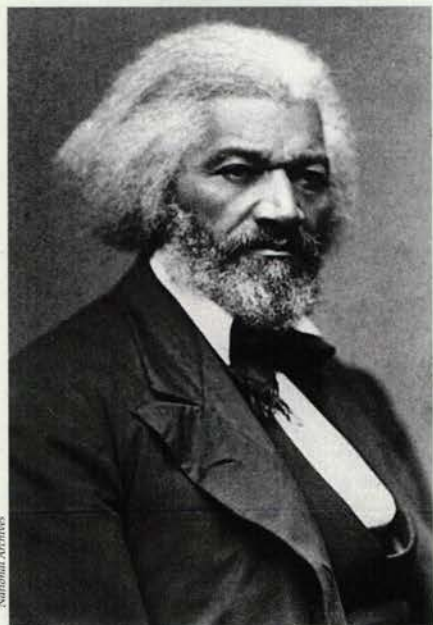
Bottom right: View of the east side of the Daniel Lady farmhouse, built around 1835, after the porches were restored.



THE “DUMP LINCOLN” MOVEMENTS OF 1864

MARK GRIMSLEY

IN 1864 DISAFFECTED ELEMENTS WITHIN ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S OWN PARTY made no fewer than three major efforts to deny him a second presidential term. Nowadays this seems not just unlikely but almost blasphemous, for in popular imagination Lincoln has become not simply a great chief executive, but an American saint. Nevertheless, the authors and backers of these “dump Lincoln” movements were, for the most part, men and women of principle. They rejected Lincoln as their standard bearer because they harbored sincere doubts about his management abilities and his program for reconstruction in the South. They fretted about his use of presidential power. Above all, they questioned his commitment to human freedom, for although Lincoln had embraced the destruction of slavery, it



ABOLITIONIST FREDERICK DOUGLASS. Despite his favorable personal impression of Lincoln, he hoped that another man would occupy the White House after the next election.

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN (opposite), photographed in February 1864.

did not necessarily follow that he would work vigorously to ensure that black Americans would enjoy anything like equal civil and political rights.

No one knew this better than another American icon from that period, the abolitionist Frederick Douglass. In August 1863 Douglass visited Lincoln at the White House in the company of Samuel C. Pomeroy, an abolitionist and Republican senator from Kansas. Pomeroy introduced Douglass to Lincoln. The president was taking his ease, “sitting in his usual position . . . with his feet in different parts of the room.” He greeted Douglass warmly and asked him to state his business, though Lincoln already knew very well what it was.¹

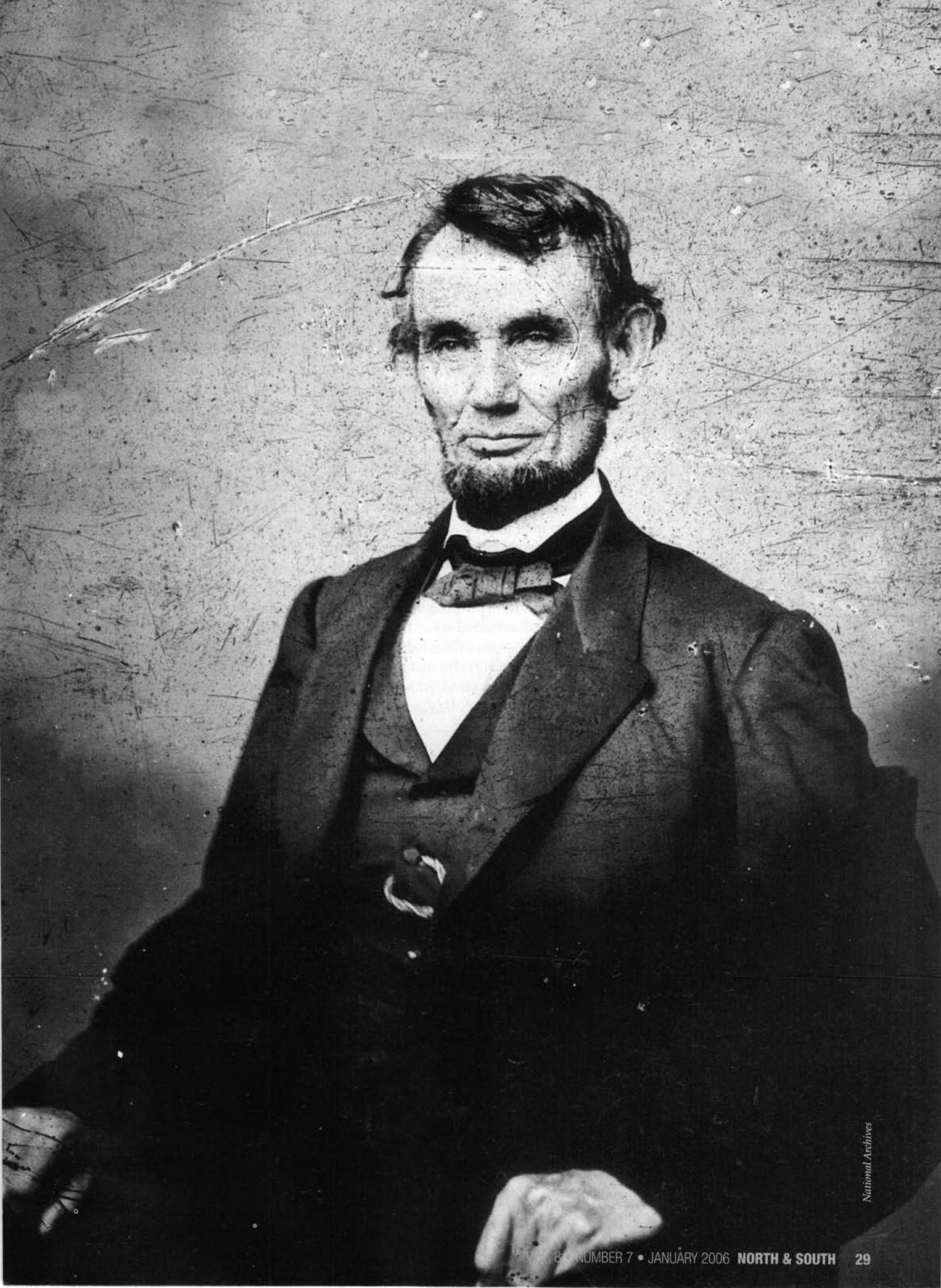
Douglass was one of the most important recruiters of black troops in the North. He had championed the enlistment of African Americans since the beginning of the war, yet in recent days had written in a public letter that “colored men have much over-rated the enlightenment, justice, and generosity of our rulers at Washington,” and strongly intimated that he would no longer lend his name and immense reputation to the recruitment of blacks for the army.² The War Department, which saw African Americans as a valuable reservoir of military manpower, could not afford that, and Douglass’ friends in the corridors of Washington power knew it. They encouraged him to take his case to Lincoln. Lincoln, being nobody’s fool, made sure Douglass received a hearing.

Douglass’ list of demands was straightforward. Black soldiers should receive the same pay as whites. They should receive the same protection under the laws of war; the federal government must insist that the Confederate government treat captured black soldiers as they would any others—official Confederate policy was to treat black prison-

ers as runaway slaves. And black soldiers who “performed great and uncommon service on the battle-field . . . should be rewarded by distinction and promotion, precisely as white soldiers are rewarded for like services.” In short, there should be black officers.³

Lincoln listened with deep courtesy, even sympathy. Then, one by one, he enveloped Douglass’ proposals in a fog of temporizing. The employment of black troops at all was “a great gain to the colored people,” he said. Plenty of whites still doubted the wisdom of making them soldiers, many found the idea offensive; blacks “ought to be willing to enter the service upon any conditions; that the fact that they were not to receive the same pay as white soldiers, seemed a necessary concession to smooth the way to their employment at all as soldiers.” While Lincoln assured Douglass that in time the unequal pay issue would be addressed, he plainly had no intention of expending political capital to do it. Nor did Lincoln warm to Douglass’ insistence that the federal government should execute Confederate prisoners in retaliation for the execution of captured blacks. As for black officers, why he would sign any commission the War Department sent to him—knowing full well none would be sent.⁴

It was vintage Lincoln. The president managed to show cordial concern even as he told Douglass that first, reduced pay for black troops was a necessary if regrettable concession to white racism; second, a policy of reprisal calculated to protect black soldiers in captivity was problematic; and third, he would not commit himself on the subject of black officers. He nevertheless succeeded in mollifying Douglass’ concerns, though the abolitionist walked away with little more than the understandable pride of a former slave who had risen high enough in life to be received by the president of the



United States—"I tell you I felt big there!" Douglass later confessed.⁵

Douglass resumed his work recruiting black troops. But despite his favorable personal impression of Lincoln, and despite a supportive speech he made in December, Douglass hoped that another man would occupy the White House after the next election. He would maintain throughout his life a sincere belief in "Lincoln's entire freedom from popular prejudice against the colored race." But he also held that when it came to the use of political power, "Lincoln was preeminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men. He was ready and willing at any time to deny, postpone, and sacrifice the rights of humanity to the colored people to promote the welfare of the white people of the country."⁶

Senator Pomeroy also wanted to see a different Republican president in the

White House. So did many Radical Republicans. So did a number of Republican moderates. The trouble was to find a candidate with enough stature and popularity to give Lincoln a serious challenge. Initially, at least, Douglass, Pomeroy, and others thought that the best candidate might be Lincoln's secretary of the treasury, Salmon P. Chase.

Chase agreed. A fifty-five-year-old Ohioan of imposing, patrician appearance, Chase had compiled a distinguished record in public office during the 1840s and 1850s. Along with Secretary of State William Seward, he had been one of Lincoln's chief rivals for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination. Lincoln had made both men members of his cabinet as part of an unusual strategy of bringing together politicians of disparate views. Seward had since become one of Lincoln's most loyal supporters, but Chase held himself somewhat aloof. And he continued to regard himself as the better man to occupy the White House.

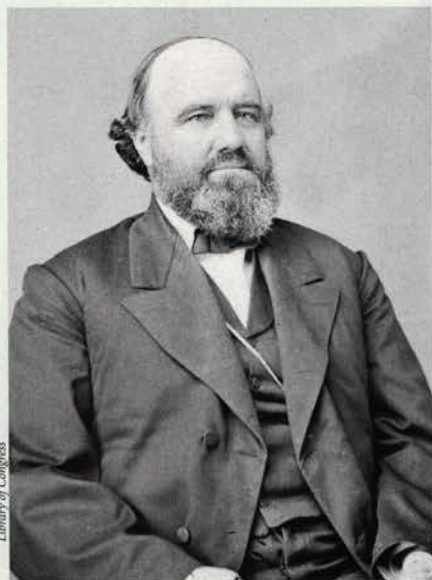
In truth, he had reason to think so. It was Chase who had been the most advanced and principled advocate of emancipation within the cabinet. It was Chase who had presided over the unprecedented changes in the federal government's financial policy that allowed it to pay for the war effort without ruinous inflation and political fallout. And it was

Chase who had seen close-up what he regarded as Lincoln's loose, inefficient style of management. "I preside over the funnel," Chase once lamented; "everybody else, and especially the Secretaries of War and the Navy, over the spigots—and keep them well open, too. Mr. Seward conducts the foreign relations with very little let or help from anybody. There is no unity and no system, except so far as it is departmental. There is progress, but it is slow and involuntary; just what is coerced by the irresistible pressure of the vast force of the people."⁷

Noah Brooks, a news correspondent and Lincoln admirer, would have rejected Chase's assessment of the president's executive skill. But he thought highly of Chase himself. "Chase's views and sentiments are not manufactured for the occasion," Brooks told his readers in the *Sacramento Daily Union*; "his life-long record, his splendid public service, his uncompromising hostility to every form of oppression and slavery, his purity of character—all these . . . added to his statesmanlike abilities, make him an eminently fit candidate for what is known as the radical wing of the loyal party of the North." Ultimately, Brooks thought, Lincoln and Chase had ideas and principles that, while different, were not irreconcilable. But he captured an important distinction between them when he noted, "Chase keeps ahead of public sentiment; Lincoln prefers to be led by it."⁸

Lincoln, indeed, showed a streak of expediency that most radicals found distasteful, if not intolerable. But by late 1863 they had learned to respect his skill at political infighting, and they also understood how much his popularity among the common voter had grown because of the important military victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. A Chase candidacy therefore faced an uphill climb if it was to reach a position from which it stood a real chance to unseat Lincoln. Could Chase manage it?

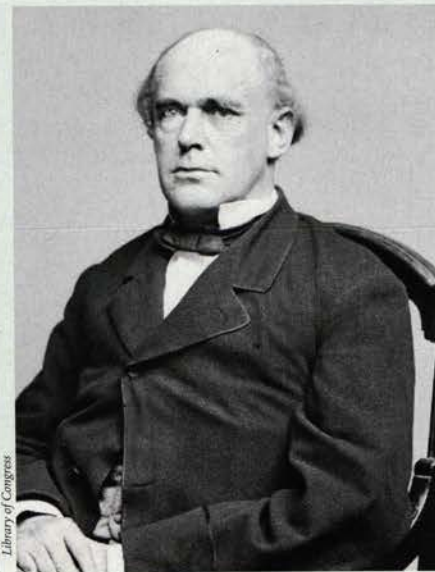
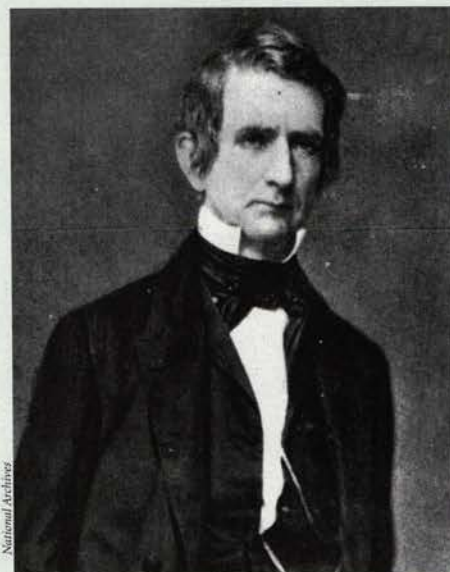
Two problems hindered him from the outset. First, Chase had nothing like Lincoln's image as "the rail splitter" or "Father Abraham," the homespun persona that attracted derision when Lincoln suffered setbacks but wore well when he seemed on top of his game. Chase's own public face was stiff and elitist. This weakness, however, can be overstated. Historians like to repeat a jibe made about him by Ohio Senator Benjamin F. Wade:



SAMUEL C. POMEROY (left), an abolitionist and Republican senator from Kansas.

WILLIAM SEWARD (below left), Lincoln's secretary of state.

SALMON P. CHASE (below), Lincoln's secretary of the treasury.



"Chase is a good man, but his theology is unsound. He thinks there is a fourth person in the Trinity."⁹ Yet most chief executives prior to Lincoln—and not a few since—had lacked the common touch. And no one doubted Chase's fidelity to principle. When Chase became chief justice of the United States in 1865, this same Senator Wade, reflecting on the vigor with which Chase would defend emancipation and black civil rights, wept as he saw Chase take the oath of office. Quoting from the Book of Matthew, he said fervently, "Lord, now lettest thou servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."¹⁰

Chase's second problem was that, as a member of Lincoln's cabinet, it would be unseemly for him to oppose Lincoln outright. Instead his supporters had to create a climate in which it would appear that the public demanded that he step forward and permit himself to stand for the presidency. Chase himself, of course, had to go along with this fiction. Yet no one seriously interested in the presidency could just passively let it come to him, and during the 1863 political campaign season Chase traveled widely to support Republican candidates who, in turn, might support him. When he did, his necessarily indirect attempts to feel out potential allies came off as somewhat oily, partially undermining his reputation as a man of principle. He also gravitated toward many prominent Republicans whom Lincoln had injured or disappointed. Lincoln, whose own supporters kept him well apprised of Chase's machinations, sometimes laughed them off: "I suppose he will, like the blue-bottle fly, lay his eggs in every rotten spot he can find." But on other occasions he conceded that he thought them "in very bad taste."¹¹ Some political observers agreed.

Still, the intrinsic difficulties of a Chase candidacy were partially offset by significant areas of strength. He commanded an extensive patronage network he had constructed as secretary of the treasury, a post that gave him the chance to fill hundreds of jobs with appointees loyal to him. He was the favorite son of Ohio, the state with the third largest number of electoral votes. Finally, if he could prove himself viable he stood a good chance of attracting the support of most Republican radicals and many moderates in Congress, particularly given the deep unhappiness of these groups

concerning Lincoln's emerging plan for a lenient, presidentially controlled program of reconstruction in the South.

At the beginning of 1864 Chase's supporters created a national committee headed by Senator Pomeroy. For a few weeks it seemed as if Chase's candidacy might gain momentum, but in February his supporters badly misplayed their hand. Their first error was the issuance of a pamphlet entitled "The Next Presidential Election," which was distributed to key newspaper editors and opinion makers by several members of Congress, most prominently Senator John Sherman of Ohio. It complained that the ongoing efforts of Lincoln's own supporters to get the endorsement of Northern state legislatures were simply an exercise of the president's patronage power and a cynical device to foreclose the deliberations of the Republican National Convention scheduled for June 1864. It pointed out, accurately, that no president since Andrew Jackson had successfully run for a second term, and argued that "the *one term principle*" had become "the political creed of the people." More dubiously, the pamphlet went on to assert that "the people have lost all confidence in his ability to suppress the rebellion and restore the Union," and that it was mortifying to find that twenty million loyal people in the North, and four million "auxilia-

JOHN SHERMAN (right), Republican senator from Ohio.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S popularity rested in considerable measure on Northern perceptions about the progress of the war. Union victories in 1863 at Chattanooga, Vicksburg, and Gettysburg (below: Confederates advance during Pickett's Charge) helped to restore faith in Lincoln's leadership.

ries"—i.e., African Americans—in the South, to say nothing of significant numbers of Southern Unionists, could not between them defeat an "insolent slave oligarchy" numbering no more than five million. A long list of Lincoln's alleged mistakes followed. Chase was nowhere mentioned by name, but the pamphlet's concluding sentence was redolent of Chase's image as it existed in the minds of his backers: "We want in our incoming president an advanced thinker; a statesman profoundly versed in political and economic science, one who can fully comprehend the spirit of the age in which we live."¹²

Although "The Next Presidential Election" made some headway with newspaper editors sympathetic to Chase, for the most part its attack on Lincoln seemed overblown, and it brought a barrage of angry mail to those congressmen who sent it out. But Chase's backers did not wait to assess the impact of the pam-



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phlet before issuing a second document. Dispatched on the authority of Senator Pomeroy, this so-called "Pomeroy Circular" was aimed at generating a full-blown national organization to pursue Chase's run for the White House. The circular was even more strident in its assault on the president. It averred that Lincoln could not possibly be reelected, then warned that if he did win a second term, "his manifest tendency toward compromises and temporary expedients of policy" would embarrass the nation, prolong the war, and bankrupt the treasury. It repeated the need for a one-term principle as "absolutely essential to the safety of our republican institutions." It concluded by saying that Chase had more of the qualities needed in an effective president than any other available candidate.¹³

Ostensibly meant to be secret, the Pomeroy Circular was published by the *Washington National Intelligencer* on February 22. It wrecked Chase's candidacy. The circular's criticism of the president was so fierce that it energized support not for Chase but for Lincoln, who soon received the endorsement of every state legislature in the North, including Chase's home state of Ohio. The explicit mention of his name forced Chase to tender Lincoln his resignation in a private letter in which he denied any knowledge of the document's content, though he did admit that he had "allowed" his name to be put forward by well wishers.¹⁴ Yet Chase felt unable to disavow the document publicly, since to do so would have fatally offended his supporters. The failure to distance himself from the Pomeroy Circular lent credence to charges that he had sanctioned it (which may indeed have been the case). Lincoln took a full week before electing not to accept Chase's resignation, and in the meantime Congressman Francis P. Blair Jr., the brother of Lincoln's postmaster general, delivered a two-hour speech in the House of Representative lambasting Chase's management of the Treasury Department. Within a few days, Chase notified his backers to make no further efforts on his behalf. The Chase boom had abruptly gone bust.

Chase's departure, however, did not end the search for an alternative to Lincoln. Those disquieted by the prospect of his serving a second term tried at first to postpone the convention of the Republican Party—temporarily renamed the National Union Party so as to attract War

Democrats—scheduled to be held in Baltimore in early June. Since it was obvious that Lincoln would win renomination if the convention were held that soon, they hoped for time in which to organize a new candidacy. When that attempt failed, most party regulars embraced the fact that Lincoln would be their standard bearer. But many abolitionists and some Radical Republicans, including Douglass and the influential newspaper editor Horace Greeley, became attracted to the idea of a third party candidate, one fully dedicated to the principles of emancipation and complete legal equality for African Americans.



FRANCIS P. BLAIR JR. (left), congressman and brother of Lincoln's postmaster general, and HORACE GREELEY (right), editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*.

Late in May 1864 delegates interested in such a candidate came together in a convention at Cleveland, Ohio. Originally organized by a group of German Americans, most of whom held advanced views on emancipation, the convention also attracted a number of Democrats, whose party was well known for its naked appeals to racism. Even before it met, the common denominator seemed to be not so much human rights as antipathy toward Lincoln. Douglass, who had initially endorsed the convention, now distanced himself from it and did not attend. Nor did Greeley or most other Radical Republicans.

Those who did attend styled themselves the Radical Democracy. They created a thirteen-point platform that combined elements of both Radical Republican and Democratic issues. On the one hand, the platform called for a vigorous prosecution of the war, a constitutional amendment to eliminate sla-

very, and the "absolute equality of all men before the law." On the other, it maintained that "the rights of free speech, free press, and the *habeas corpus* must be held inviolate," a jibe at the Lincoln administration's alleged constitutional abuses of individual rights. It also endorsed the principle of a one-term presidency and held that Reconstruction policy belonged to Congress, not the executive.¹⁵

The convention then nominated John C. Frémont for president. A much admired figure among the German American community, the famed "Pathfinder of the West" had been the Republican Party's first presidential nominee in



1856. As a major general in the regular army, he had commanded in Missouri during 1861 and issued a proclamation emancipating the slaves of disloyal Missourians. Radical Republicans had applauded Frémont's action but Lincoln had forced him to retract it, then removed him from command in November 1861 and acquiesced in his de facto demotion from a subsequent command in West Virginia the following year. Frémont was then relieved at his own request and studiously given no further assignments. Thereafter he nursed a bitter personal hatred toward Lincoln.

Frémont's candidacy won the support of a few Radical Republicans and abolitionists, most particularly Wendell Phillips, who sent a public letter to the convention excoriating Lincoln and endorsing Frémont. But most regarded him as unreliable and a poor choice of opponent against Lincoln. They feared, with reason, that he would not attract enough

support to be a significant challenge to Lincoln but might divert enough votes to benefit the Democrats. At a minimum, however, they hoped that the incipient challenges from Chase and Frémont might impel Lincoln to take more seriously his need for support from the radical wing of the party.

Those hopes were dashed when in July Lincoln "pocket vetoed" a Congressional plan for Reconstruction known as the Wade-Davis Bill after its sponsors, Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio and Representative Henry Winter Davis of Maryland. The bill was an unequivocal rejection of Lincoln's own Reconstruction plan, which many Republicans regarded as too lenient and an encroach-

ment by the executive branch upon the legislative branch of government. It was passed by wide margins in both houses of Congress and expected to be signed by Lincoln, who during the debate over the bill had given little indication that it troubled him. Proponents of the bill were therefore furious when Lincoln refused to do so, for the fact that Congress went out of session before the expiration of ten days meant that constitutionally the bill failed to become law. A subsequent proclamation by the president explaining his decision—and blandly stating that any Southern state could choose the harsher Congressional plan to his own more lenient one if it chose—simply enraged Radical Republicans still further.

"But what are we to do?" moaned Representative Thaddeus Stevens in a personal letter denouncing Lincoln's "infamous" proclamation. "Condemn privately and applaud publicly!"¹⁶ In a tough wartime election year, that seemed exactly what Republicans must do, lest they give an advantage to their political opponents. Yet some had had enough. Long impatient with Lincoln's perceived conservatism and disquieted by the strong hand with which he wielded his power as chief executive, the rejection of the Wade-Davis Bill led some to contemplate an open break with the president. Further reinforcing this sentiment was the recent departure of Salmon P. Chase from the cabinet—Chase had once again submitted his resignation on an unrelated matter and Lincoln this time had accepted it—which meant that the Radical Republicans had lost their principal voice within the Cabinet.

Moreover, Lincoln's popular support had slipped, thanks mainly to news from the battlefield, where the war in Virginia and Georgia seemed stalemated. Indeed, in mid-July a Confederate corps under Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early invaded Maryland and briefly made it all the way to the outskirts of Washington. With a strong Democratic challenge in the offing, Frémont's insurgent Radical Democracy threatening to draw votes from the Republican camp, and Lincoln's strength as a candidate beginning to wane, the smart political move, as Lincoln's foes within the party saw it, was to do what they wanted to do anyway: dump Lincoln in favor of a new candidate.

But who would be that candidate? Chase supporters quietly hoped it might yet be the former treasury secretary, now unhindered by a post within the Lincoln cabinet. Others fantasized about persuading Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant to enter the race—both Republicans and Democrats had sounded out Grant's political ambitions early in the year—but Grant had no interest in the idea and, in fact, favored Lincoln. Still others set their sights on Major General Benjamin F. Butler, a prominent War Democrat short on battlefield accomplishments but widely praised for his firm, canny military administration. Butler had squelched the secessionist movement in Maryland in May 1861; he had created the policy of retaining runaway



JOHN C. FRÉMONT (left), nominated for president at the Radical Democracy convention in Cleveland, and WENDELL PHILLIPS (right), who endorsed Frémont's candidacy.



This political cartoon, published in the June 25, 1864, edition of the *New York Illustrated News*, depicts Abraham Lincoln as a man of expedience and John C. Frémont as one of principle. The perception that Lincoln was too expedient was a common thread in all the "Dump Lincoln" movements.

slaves whose labor had been used by the Confederate army; he had effectively governed New Orleans, the largest city in the Confederacy; he had presided over the genesis of free labor in Louisiana; and he was one of the most vigorous proponents of African American troops.

As with Grant, Butler's name had cropped up earlier in the year as a possible candidate. Unlike Grant, Butler did have presidential ambitions, enough so that Lincoln is known to have offered him the vice presidency and to have made certain that Butler held a major military command in Virginia. Butler regarded the vice presidential berth as a political dead end—he supposedly told Lincoln's emissary that he would take the job only if Lincoln promised to die within three months of his second inauguration—but the presidency continued to interest him. He read attentively the stream of letters that began to reach him from supporters in the North, all referring to the movement within the party to abandon Lincoln.

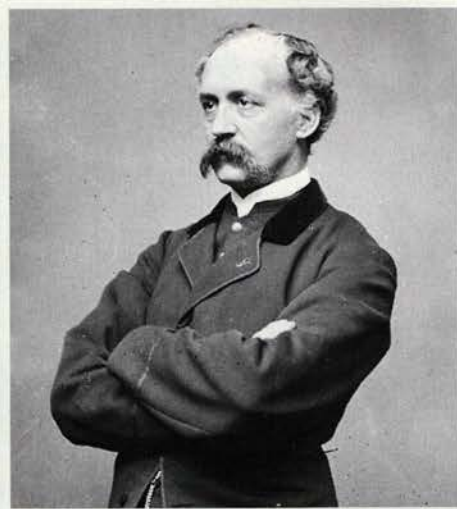
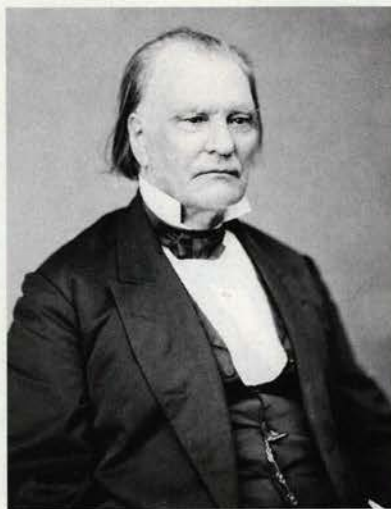
In this way Butler learned that Henry Winter Davis, the thwarted co-sponsor of the Wade-Davis Bill, was readying a public letter of protest against the president. Although Butler's supporters tried to delay publication of the letter until they could get organized enough to capitalize on it, the letter appeared several days before they hoped it would. In the event, it was actually published over the name not only of Davis but also the bill's other sponsor, Benjamin Wade. The letter appeared in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* on August 5; it brought this third movement to dump Lincoln out into the open.

The "Wade-Davis Manifesto" accused Lincoln of keeping control of Reconstruction policy so that the electoral votes of any reconstructed states would be "at the dictation of his personal ambition." It questioned Lincoln's support for an amendment to abolish slavery (which was a plank of the National Union platform as well as that of the Radical Democracy) and said of his pocket veto of the Wade-Davis Bill: "A more studied outrage of the legislative authority of the people has never been perpetrated." Lincoln's "rash and fatal act," the letter continued, had struck "a blow at the friends of his Administration, at the rights of humanity, and at the principles of republican Government." The presi-

dent, in short, had gone over the line. "He must understand that our support is of a cause and not of a man; that the authority of Congress is paramount and must be respected; . . . and if he wishes our support he must confine himself to his executive duties . . . and leave political reorganization to Congress." The letter concluded by asking supporters of the national government to "consider the remedy of [Lincoln's] usurpations, and, having found it, fearlessly execute it."¹⁷

This could be read, and indeed was, as a call for another candidate. Many thought the tone of the Wade-Davis Manifesto excessive, but its basic message resonated in several areas across the country. In Hamilton, Ohio, for example,

a group met on August 6 to discuss the possibility of persuading both Lincoln and Frémont to withdraw in favor of a third candidate. The group issued a call for a convention to meet in Buffalo in late September. Nothing came of it, but on August 18 a group of about twenty-five prominent Republicans met at the home of George Opdyke, the mayor of New York City. Like the Hamilton, Ohio, group, the Opdyke group also made tentative plans to call for a convention in late September "to consider the state of the nation and to concentrate the union strength on some one candidate who commands the confidence of the country, even by a new nomination if necessary."¹⁸ Their choice of venue was Cin-



BENJAMIN F. WADE (left), senator from Ohio, and HENRY WINTER DAVIS (right), congressman from Maryland.



ON JULY 11, 1864, Lincoln (mounted on a horse, wearing his stovepipe hat) viewed Union forces at Fort Stevens, on the outskirts of Washington, engage rebels under Lieutenant General Jubal Early. Early's invasion of Maryland was only one factor that sapped Lincoln's strength as a candidate in the summer of 1864.

cinnati, the heart of Chase's political base, and the presence of Chase supporters at both meetings suggests that he was the unspoken candidate they had in mind.

Lincoln's situation now appeared dire. On August 22 the National Executive Committee of the Union Party—Lincoln's campaign organization, for all practical purposes—met in New York to review his election prospects. Major political figures from Illinois, Indiana, and Pennsylvania believed that Lincoln would lose those states. The committee chair, *New York Times* publisher Henry Raymond, estimated that Lincoln would lose New York as well. Raymond sent the president a report of the meeting; the following day Lincoln composed his fa-

mous "blind memorandum," which he required each Cabinet member to sign without reading the contents. The memorandum began with the stark sentence, "This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected."¹⁹

At the end of August the Opdyke group met for a second time. A delegate present at the conference wrote that the group decided that "it was useless and inexpedient to attempt to run Mr. Lincoln in the hope of victory against the blind enthusiasm of the masses in favor of [George B.] McClellan," the almost certain Democratic nominee.²⁰ At the behest of the group, three prominent New

York newspaper editors, among them Horace Greeley, dispatched a letter to northern governors asking pointedly: Could Lincoln be reelected? Could he win in their state? Should a different candidate be selected? The group also organized a delegation to ask Lincoln to step aside as candidate. And on the assumption that he would refuse, it decided to press forward with a convention in Cincinnati late in September to determine what to do—support Lincoln or overthrow him in favor of another candidate. As usual, the exact candidate remained shadowy. Butler had largely fallen from consideration; Chase's name was never mentioned outright.

Events during the next two days transformed the entire political landscape. In Chicago, the Democratic Party nominated George B. McClellan on August 31, which was expected; and did so on a peace platform, which was not entirely unexpected but nevertheless a serious blunder made worse by the declaration that the war to preserve the Union had been a failure. The next day Major General William T. Sherman's army captured Atlanta, a blow to the Democratic Party as much as the Confederacy, because the victory rendered ludicrous the "war failure" plank. McClellan was forced to repudiate the peace platform as almost his first act as the Democratic nominee. Lincoln suddenly looked once again like the successful, popular chief executive he had been at the year's beginning.

Plans for a Cincinnati convention evaporated. Most Radical Republicans and many abolitionists now closed ranks, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, around the president. (Frederick Douglass himself had decided to support Lincoln in early August, after a second meeting at the White House.) But Frémont remained a candidate and neither Benjamin Wade nor Henry Winter Davis was yet reconciled to Lincoln. True, it was unlikely that a continued Frémont candidacy would cost the National Union Party so much as a hundred thousand votes. Yet any politically aware American recalled that in 1844 the fringe candidacy of James G. Birney had polled only 62,300 votes—less than three percent of all ballots cast—and had given the presidency to James K. Polk rather than Henry Clay.

Under the circumstances, it seemed best to take no chances. Senator



HENRY RAYMOND (left), *New York Times* publisher, and GEORGE B. McCLELLAN (right), 1864 Democratic presidential candidate.



A DECEPTIVE BROADSIDE, ostensibly a pro-McClellan campaign piece but actually a piercing attack on the Democratic platform.

Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, a Radical Republican but a Lincoln supporter, approached Wade and arranged for him to back the president in exchange for the resignation of Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, the Cabinet's most vocally conservative member. Chandler then met with Frémont and appealed for him to withdraw. It is not certain that the appeal had any effect, but on September 22 Frémont did end his candidacy, which by then was certain to do nothing but give aid and comfort to the McClellan campaign. As for Chase, Lincoln dangled before his eyes the prospect of becoming Chief Justice of the United States, though he carefully refrained from naming Chase to the post until after the election. The gambit made sure of Chase's support even as it guaranteed a strong defender of emancipation on the nation's highest court.

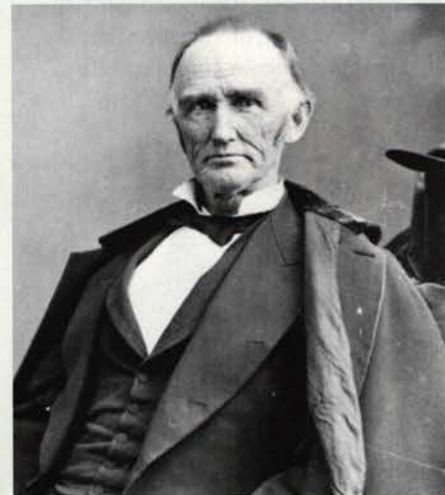
On November 8 the northern electorate handed Lincoln a decisive win over his Democratic opponent: a fifty-five-percent majority in the popular vote, a lopsided margin of 212 votes to twenty-one in the Electoral College. His victory has come down to us as a triumph for human rights. "The freedom of millions of slaves depended on it," one recent historian of the 1864 election has written, "and it did more to define and expand the meaning of democracy in the United States than any event since the adoption of the Declaration of Independence."²¹ Viewed solely in terms of a contest between the National Union Party, which favored emancipation, and the Democratic Party, which rejected it as a needless obstacle to reunion, such an interpretation has much to commend it. But it requires one either to overlook the three "dump Lincoln" movements of 1864 or else to ascribe them merely to fits of pique or self-indulgence. This is the rhetorical strategy ordinarily adopted in accounts of the election campaign. Thus, Salmon P. Chase is routinely depicted as pompous, Frémont as vengeful, Wade and Davis as twisted by rage, and so on.

Even if such were the case, it remains incontestable that many people deeply committed to black freedom and democracy harbored doubts about Lincoln, and these doubts deserve to be considered rather than ignored or explained away. What, then, is the significance of the "dump Lincoln" movements of 1864?

First, a concern for what would nowadays be called an "imperial presidency" was a recurrent theme among those within Lincoln's own party who questioned whether he deserved a second term, as well as among the opposition Democratic Party. Americans since the time of Andrew Jackson had been disquieted by the "spoils system" and the power of political patronage to expand the grip of the chief executive. No president from Jackson until Lincoln successfully ran for a second term. The Confederate States of America reflected a national rather than a specifically Southern concern when it

limited its own president to a single six-year term. The principle of a one-term presidency, explicitly endorsed by the supporters of Chase and Frémont and tacitly argued in the Wade-Davis Manifesto, may have been self-serving, but it also reflected an authentic current in the political culture of the day.

Second, several aspects of the "dump Lincoln" movements—the sense that the outcome of the June National Union Party convention was provisional, the seemingly weird fusion of abolitionists and Democrats in the Radical Democracy, the proposed candidacy of Butler at



ZACHARIAH CHANDLER (left), Radical Republican senator from Michigan and Lincoln supporter, and MONTGOMERY BLAIR (right), Lincoln's postmaster general and sacrificial lamb.



PRESIDENT LINCOLN riding through Richmond on April 4, 1865, amid the enthusiastic cheers of certain residents.

the head of a War Democrat-Radical Democratic alliance, even rumors that Frémont and McClellan might somehow reach a *modus vivendi*—suggest that political activists in 1864 probably believed what historian Michael F. Holt has recently argued: that the American party system, which had shifted turbulently during the 1850s, was still in flux, and that a two-party system based on the Republicans and Democrats was not yet the certainty then that it seems today.²²

Finally, the “dump Lincoln” movements serve as a reminder that the Great Emancipator was hardly the only American in favor of human freedom and that even more advanced opinions concerning issues of racial equality existed in the corridors of power in Civil War America. The efforts to replace Lincoln as a candidate can be seen, in part, as a struggle by these more advanced opinions to find expression. Their failure underscores the fact that they had yet to consolidate into a single, coherent voice.

One question remains: Could anyone have unseated Lincoln as his party's presidential nominee in 1864? Three distinguished historians of the Civil War era—David Donald, Jean H. Baker, and Michael Holt—have maintained that Ulysses S. Grant alone could have done so, and he of course foreclosed the possibility.²³ But a minimal rewrite of history would have brought Chase much closer to that cherished goal. Had his campaign been managed so as not to self-destruct, and had his backers and others succeeded in their efforts to postpone the National Union convention from June until August or even mid-July, Lincoln's prospects would not have been nearly so great as they were early in the year. And it is possible, though only just, that in March 1865 Frederick Douglass would have had the pleasure of making a third visit to the White House, this time to celebrate the inauguration of his friend and ally, President Salmon Portland Chase. □

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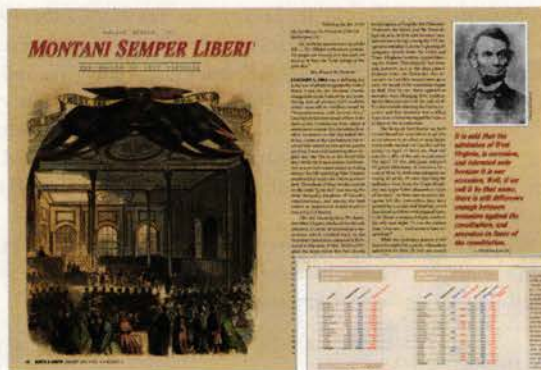
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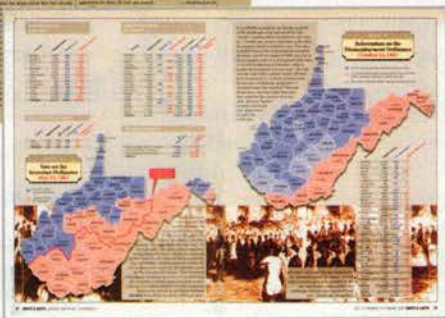
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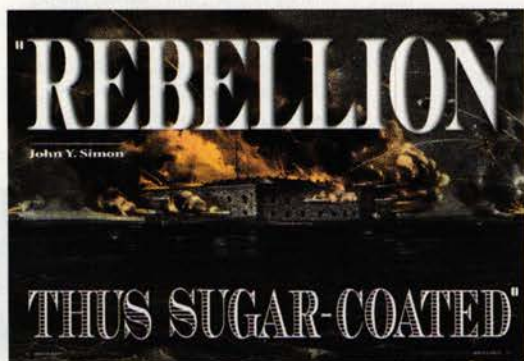


Some have no time for endless arguments over the legality of secession or whether it was constitutional—others love the controversy.



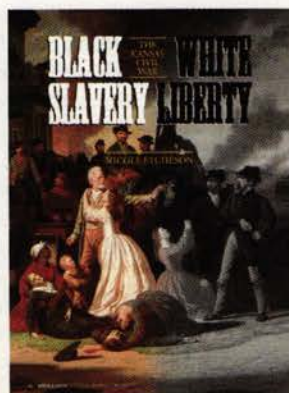
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In 1860 secessionists claimed a unilateral right to withdraw from the Union. Lincoln denounced this as an "ingenious sophism." —John Y. Simon

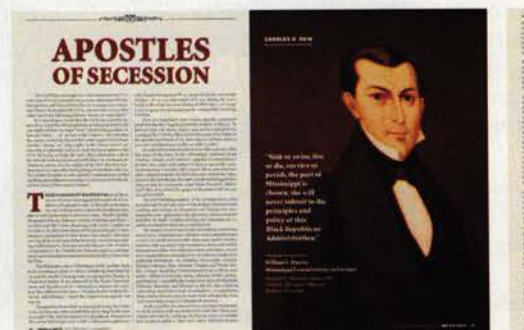


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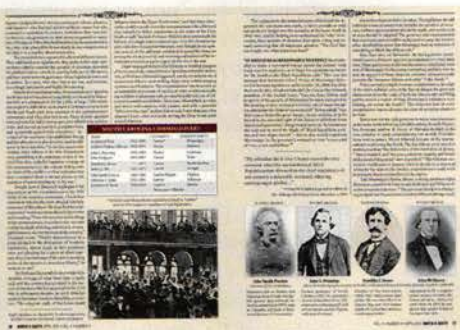
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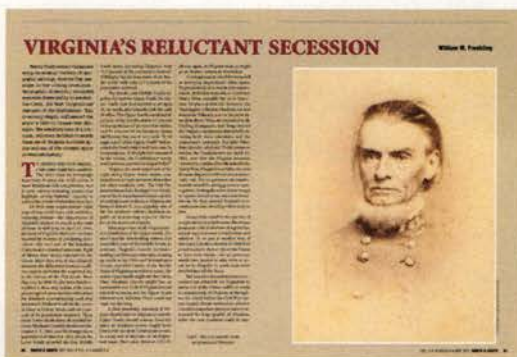
In the winter of 1860-1861 several Deep South states sent "secession commissioners" to other slave states, to persuade them to join the ranks of the secessionists. What were their arguments? —Charles B. Dew



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(Rare Issue)

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RELUCTANT
SECESSION**

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—William W. Freehling



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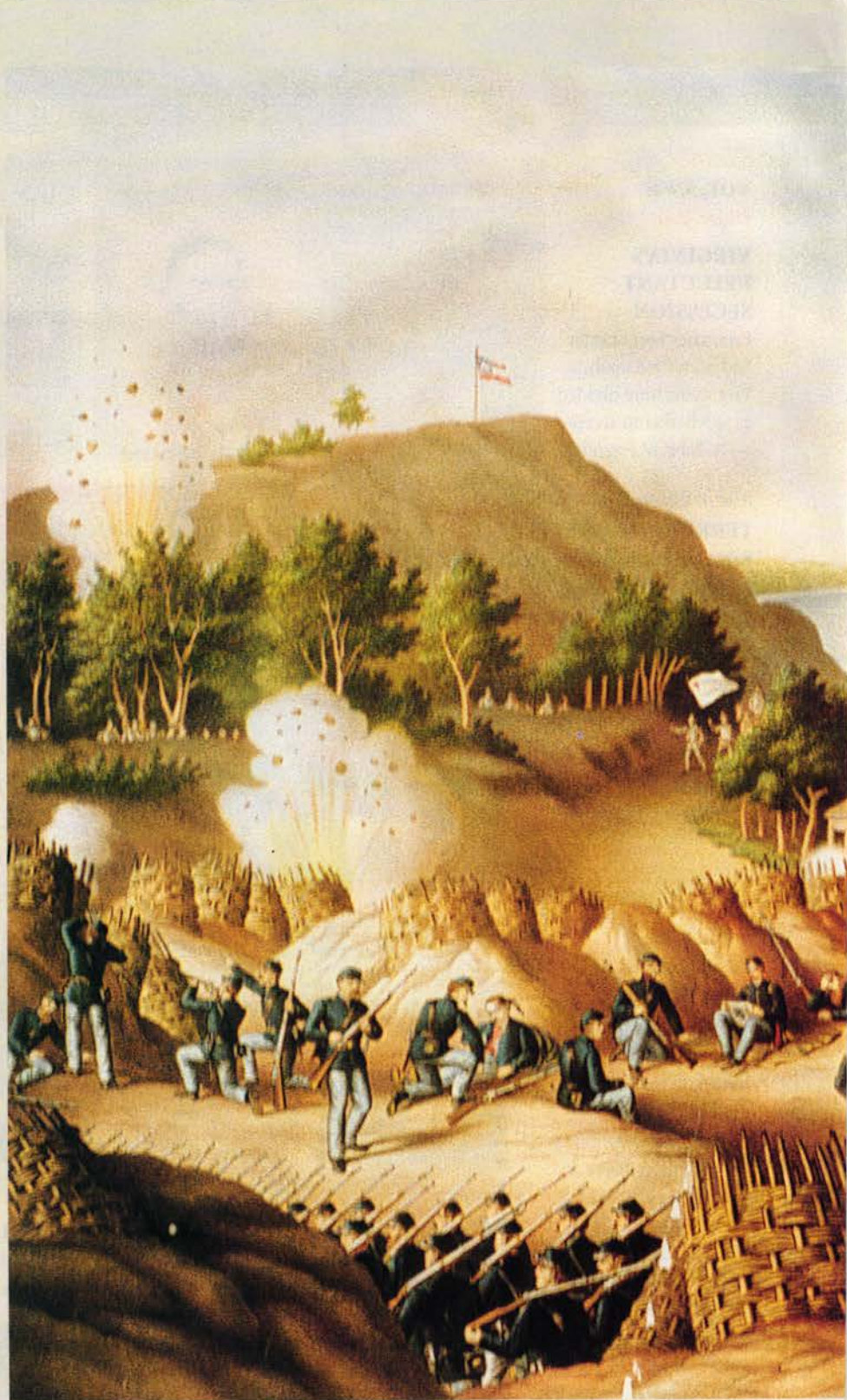
MOST READERS OF *NORTH & SOUTH*

are familiar to one degree or another with the story of the Vicksburg Campaign. Certainly those of you who have subscribed to this magazine for any length of time have read numerous articles over the years that discussed the many facets of the campaign and detailed the strategy and tactics of its complex operations. Some articles have even related a few of the marvelous stories of human interest that make Vicksburg such a fascinating campaign to study. Continuing in that vein, this article will look at the Confederate leadership and examine a principle cause of its failure in the defense of Vicksburg, namely the unity of command—or to be more precise, the lack thereof.

Unity of command is one of the nine principles of war recognized the world over. The May 1986 version of FM 100-5, the U.S. Army's manual on operations, states, "In both the operational and tactical dimensions, it is axiomatic that the employment of military forces in a manner that develops their full combat power requires unity of command." Although straightforward sounding, the army considers it necessary to define this concept for those who find it difficult to grasp. "Unity of command means directing and coordinating the action of all forces toward a common goal or objective," reads the manual, which goes on to provide guidance for achieving this desired principle: "Coordination may be achieved by vesting a single commander with the requisite authority to direct and to coordinate all forces employed in pursuit of a common goal."¹

Although the nine principles of war were not formally adopted by the U.S. Army until 1921, these very same principles guided the armies of the Union and Confederacy during the Civil War, and generals in blue and gray understood and appreciated these principles in much the same way as do officers of the modern-day armed forces. Thus it is difficult to fathom why Confederate civil and military authorities failed either to grasp or exercise the key principle of unity of command in operations along the Mississippi River, and especially in defense of the "Gibraltar of the Confederacy"—Vicksburg.

Two seemingly unrelated events, both of which occurred in 1862, ensured that unity of command would not be realized by those responsible for the de-



Kurz & Allison's depiction of the siege of Vicksburg.

fense of Vicksburg. These events combined to have tragic consequences for the Confederacy, as they helped seal the doom of Vicksburg long before Union forces launched the campaign that resulted in the surrender of the river bastion on July 4, 1863. The fall of the fortress city was a staggering blow to the Confederacy—it resulted in the loss of the Mississippi River and separated the

vast trans-Mississippi region from the Southern heartland. The loss of Vicksburg shattered hopes for Southern independence and, when coupled with the defeat of Robert E. Lee's vaunted Army of Northern Virginia on the battlefield at Gettysburg, marked the turning point of the conflict. Although the war raged for twenty-one months longer, the summer of disaster ultimately resulted in the

Terrence J. Winschel

A Tragedy of Errors

The Failure of the Confederate High Command
in the Defense of Vicksburg



fall of Richmond and the surrender at Appomattox.

Astonishingly, most works on the Vicksburg Campaign fail to mention these two events or to demonstrate their association with one another and the impact they had on the military situation in the lower Mississippi River Valley in 1863. Yet they are central to an appreciation of the complexities of the Vicksburg Campaign and, especially, to an under-

standing of the three men most directly responsible for the tragedy of errors that resulted in the fall of Vicksburg.

It is only proper, then, to begin this article by introducing the cast of leading characters in this tragedy—one that regrettably lacks Shakespearean romance and nobility. In order of appearance they are: Jefferson Davis, Joseph E. Johnston, and John C. Pemberton. These three men are certainly no strangers to most Civil

War enthusiasts; each brings to this tragedy his own unique level of incompetence, stupidity, and ignorance.

Jefferson Davis, a native Kentuckian who is more closely associated with the Magnolia State, was the tenth and final child born of Samuel Emory Davis and his wife, the former Jane Cook. Raised near Woodville, Mississippi, Davis enjoyed the benefits and lifestyle of one of Mississippi's leading families. Educated at (among other places) Jefferson College, near Natchez, and Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, Davis secured an appointment to the United States Military Academy. Although he compiled a good academic record at West Point, he also accrued demerits by the score and on more than one occasion found himself on the brink of dismissal. Survive, however, he did, and at time of graduation in 1828 he stood twenty-third out of thirty-three cadets.

Commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry, Davis experienced routine assignments to various frontier posts and even some action against Indians. In 1832 the young lieutenant received the surrender of the Sauk chief Black Hawk and escorted him from Wisconsin Territory to Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis. During this trip the two men got acquainted and Black Hawk, perhaps sensing something of Davis' fate, commented of the future Confederate president that he was "a good and brave young chief."²

In 1835 Davis resigned from the army and married Sarah Knox Taylor, the daughter of his former commanding officer, Zachary Taylor. But tragedy soon struck as both fell victim of malaria, and Knoxie, as Davis called his bride, died. Although Davis himself recovered, he was permanently impaired by the disease. Heartbroken, he returned to Brierfield, his plantation home on the Mississippi River south of Vicksburg, and there remained in seclusion for almost ten years. He applied himself to farming and, with the help of his older brother Joseph, became a full member of the planter elite. When Davis finally emerged from mourning, he remarried and was elected to Congress. At the outbreak of the war with Mexico, he resigned his seat, took up the sword, and became colonel of the 1st Mississippi Rifles. Davis and his men won renown at Buena Vista, where he was wounded in the foot.

Davis returned to Mississippi a hero and was appointed to the U.S. Senate to fill an unexpired term. Although elected senator in his own right in 1850, he soon resigned to seek the governorship of Mississippi. In a close election, during which he espoused the need for a united South committed to protecting its rights under the Constitution, he lost to the moderate Henry S. Foote. Destined for public life, Davis in 1852 became secretary of war in the administration of Franklin Pierce and ran the War Department with efficiency. His tenure as secretary was characterized by the remarkably progressive improvements he made to the army. Returning to the Senate in 1857, Davis became an eloquent spokesman for Southern interests, yet only reluctantly came to support secession.

Upon the secession of Mississippi, Davis resigned his seat with a heavy heart and left Washington. He was appointed a major general by Governor John J. Pettus and given command of the Army of Mississippi—a position infinitely to his liking. However, he was quickly overshadowed by the storm clouds that engulfed the nation and was elected president of the newly established Confederate States of America. At his inauguration in Montgomery, William L. Yancey of Alabama declared of Davis, “The man and the hour have met.” His bold proclamation was premature.³

As commander-in-chief, Davis sought to fight a defensive war and hold every inch of the Confederacy. This, of course, required spreading limited manpower and resources over a vast area, and would have disastrous consequences for the Southern nation. Davis’ views on strategy were not shared by many of the generals whom he appointed. Among those opposed to the president’s views was Joseph E. Johnston, who became one of Davis’ most outspoken critics.

Born in Virginia in 1807, Johnston was the son of a distinguished soldier of the American Revolution who had served with “Light Horse Harry” Lee in the Southern Department. Following in his father’s footsteps, Johnston secured a cadetship at West Point, from which he graduated in 1829 (the same class as Robert E. Lee, and a year behind Davis), thirteenth in a class of forty-six.

Johnston developed a reputation as a brave and competent officer. Wounded twice in action against the Seminole In-



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Left: Sauk chief Black Hawk, who surrendered in 1832 to a young Lieutenant Jefferson Davis. Right: Jefferson Davis, at age thirty-seven, with his bride, Varina Howell.



Library of Congress

Davis won renown at the February 23, 1847, Battle of Buena Vista (above), during which he was wounded in the foot.

dians and five times during the Mexican War, the Virginian rose steadily through the ranks and was appointed lieutenant colonel in the 1st U.S. Cavalry in 1855. As the nation drifted to the brink of civil war, Johnston was elevated to brigadier general and appointed quartermaster general of the army. When hostilities between the states erupted, Johnston resigned his commission and offered his sword first to Virginia, then to the Confederacy. As the highest-ranking officer in the U.S. Army to resign his commission, he fully expected to be named top general in the Confederate army. It was a blow to his extremely sensitive and large ego when three men he considered his junior were placed above him in seniority. This rankled Johnston, whose jealousy and resentment could not be disguised, and during the war he formed a

bitter and acrimonious relationship with the Confederate president.

Despite the obvious strained relations resulting from Johnston’s bruised ego, Davis appointed him to command the Southern forces that assembled at Harper’s Ferry. What in retrospect could have been construed as an omen, Johnston concluded that Harper’s Ferry could not be held, and evacuated the strategic town. This pattern of operations would be followed through a string of cities and towns throughout the war, for Johnston believed in sacrificing geography in order to concentrate available manpower into large armies with which to do battle.

Although Johnston basked in the glory gained at First Manassas, the president’s confidence in his abilities continued to wane as the spring of 1862 wit-



Left: Inauguration of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama, on February 18, 1861. Right: General Joseph E. Johnston.



The Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, May 31, 1862. After being wounded at Fair Oaks, Johnston was replaced by Robert E. Lee and would never again command the principal Confederate army in Virginia.

nessed his army's steady retreat up the Peninsula toward Richmond. It proved fortunate for Davis and the Confederacy that Johnston was badly wounded at the Battle of Fair Oaks on May 31. Incapacitated, he was thus replaced by Robert E. Lee; Johnston would never again command the principle Confederate army in Virginia.

While recuperating from his wound, Johnston fell in with those who opposed the president politically. As a result, Davis only reluctantly appointed the general to a command when he reported fit for duty in November. Johnston was assigned to head the Department of the West, a broad area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. It was hoped that Johnston could coordinate the movements of the armies of General Braxton Bragg in Tennessee

and Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton in Mississippi.

Contrary to statements relative to his condition to return to duty, Johnston was still not fully recovered physically. This author submits that Johnston was not well mentally either, for a wound as desperate as he had received at Fair Oaks would take some fight out of any man. In addition, the general upon his return was unwilling to support the president's strategic plan for the Western department; it is clear that Johnston's heart was never in his mission. His actions would be to everyone's dissatisfaction.⁴

The third and final member of the cast is Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton, who commanded the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana from headquarters in the capital city of Jackson. A native of Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, he was born on August 10, 1814. Although of Quaker stock, Pemberton grew quite active socially and enjoyed parties, dances, and the theatre. Yet he was a quiet young man who shied away from intimacy and counted few close friends. (Among his boyhood pals was George G. Meade, who was destined to command the Union army at Gettysburg.) After entering the University of Pennsylvania, Pemberton sought an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point in order to study civil engineering. President Andrew Jackson, a close friend of Pemberton's father, gladly awarded the appointment on May 15, 1833, and John embarked on a military career.

At West Point, Pemberton was an average cadet who did not excel academically and, like Davis, accrued demerits by the score. At one point during his first class (senior) year, he was arrested for breaking academy regulations dealing with possession of liquor. Only after the entire class signed a pledge not to drink for their remaining days at the academy were the charges against him dropped. John went on to complete the rigorous curriculum of West Point and at graduation stood twenty-seven out of fifty cadets in the class of 1837.

Pemberton was assigned to duty with the 4th U.S. Artillery, in which he served during the Second Seminole War and the Mexican War. In Mexico, the young lieutenant saw action under Zachary Taylor in the engagements at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Matamoras. He later served as an aide-de-camp on the staff of William J. Worth in the campaign for Monterrey and during the drive on Mexico City. Pemberton proved himself a brave and energetic officer of whom his superiors took notice. His actions on the fields of battle at Monterrey and Molino del Rey earned him two brevets for "gallant and meritorious conduct." The laurels won in Mexico would be the proudest of his long military career.

Shortly after his return from Mexico, Pemberton married Martha Thompson of Norfolk, Virginia. Devoted to one another, their marriage was one of bliss and produced seven children. Pattie, the name by which Pemberton affectionately called his wife, was a beautiful, yet domineering, woman who held tremendous sway over her husband. As the nation drifted to the brink of civil war, John was torn

between love of country and love for his wife. Upon the secession of Virginia, Pattie wrote John from Norfolk, "My darling husband why are you not with us? Why do you stay?" Pemberton biographer Michael Ballard asserts that "Pattie had made clear where her heart lay, and he would never have turned against her." On April 24, 1861, John Pemberton resigned his commission as captain in the U.S. Army and offered his services to Virginia.⁵

Governor John Letcher of Virginia quickly nominated Pemberton to be a lieutenant colonel in the state force. Less than two months later, the northern-born Pemberton was made a brigadier general in the Confederate army. John's rapid rise was based more on the need for experienced officers than on his abilities. The trend continued as he was pro-

moted major general to rank from January 14, 1862, and later that same year to the grade of lieutenant general. During this period Pemberton gained administrative experience, serving briefly in the Virginia tidewater, then as commander of the Department of South Carolina and Georgia. In the fall of 1862, with little useful field or combat experience, he was named commander of the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana and left for a rendezvous with destiny at Vicksburg.

Responsible for the defense of the Mississippi River and the twin bastions of Vicksburg and Port Hudson, Pemberton had little time to acquaint himself with his new command, as Federal forces were already active within the department. His administrative abilities were quickly taxed to the limit—the

needs of his department were many and the resources few. Effective departmental operations were further plagued by a myriad of problems: poor staff work, mediocre subordinates, inadequate rail transportation, lack of troops (especially cavalry), and shortages of food, clothing, medicine, and ammunition. Although Pemberton immersed himself in the administrative details of departmental command, combat ability was needed by the Confederacy. In that regard, events would soon demonstrate that John Pemberton had been promoted far beyond his capacities.

* * *

WITH THE CAST OF CHARACTERS IN PLACE, let us examine the two events, previously alluded to, that combined to have such dramatic impact on the Confederacy and its struggle for independence.

The opening scene is set in Charleston, South Carolina. The curtain opens on March 14, 1862, when then Major General John C. Pemberton was assigned permanent command of the Department of South Carolina and Georgia. Demonstrating his penchant for managerial manipulation, Pemberton, who had replaced Robert E. Lee as department commander, began an "inexplicable reorganization that blossomed into an unnecessarily complex bureaucracy." Biographer Ballard asserts that "Pemberton's style as chief administrator of the department complemented his command structure. He became bogged down in minute details...[and]... paid too much attention to matters that were normally taken care of by a general's staff." To compound matters, his staff lacked the experience and cohesiveness required for efficient operations.⁶

In the aftermath of Shiloh and during the Seven Days Battles, manpower drainage from his department caused Pemberton to constrict his defenses, which led to local unease. Adhering to Lee's principle that "holding lines was more important than protecting outlying areas," Pemberton removed cannon and men from across his department to better defend the key cities of Charleston and Savannah. Such action served to enrage those who lived in the affected areas, and caused alarm among the states' elected officials. His introduction of martial law without adequate emergency was



Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton (left) and General P.G.T. Beauregard.



Americans forcing their way to the main plaza at the September 23, 1846, Battle of Monterey, at which Pemberton earned a brevet for his "gallant and meritorious conduct."

viewed as insensitive and worked to undermine the confidence of those he was supposed to defend. According to Ballard, "He approached his job from purely a military point of view" and failed to grasp "that public support and morale were necessary to favorable military results."⁷

Pemberton's diplomatic skills have been characterized as "unspectacular." Thus it will come as no surprise that his strained relations with local and state officials, especially Governor Francis Pickens, and the citizens of Charleston aggravated his problems in South Carolina. These relations steadily deteriorated as he abandoned more of the coastal areas without prior notification to civilian authorities and began to espouse the belief that Charleston itself was untenable, recommending that forts, including Sumter, be dismantled. In a note to Jefferson Davis, Governor Pickens complained of Pemberton and the situation: "I fear Charleston is to be sacrificed by a total incompetency in the officer commanding and a total want of knowledge of the country."⁸

In response to the clamor that steadily poured into Richmond from disgruntled South Carolinians, Davis instructed his military advisor, Robert E. Lee, to counsel Pemberton. "The importance of defending both Charleston and Savannah to the last extremity, particularly Charleston, is earnestly brought to your attention," wrote Lee on May 29, 1862. He emphasized to the Pennsylvanian in gray, "Let it be distinctly understood by everybody that Charleston and Savannah are to be defended to the last extremity. If the harbors are taken the cities are to be fought street by street and house by house as long as we have a foot of ground to stand upon."⁹

Although Pemberton earnestly worked to improve the situation by strengthening the fortifications around Charleston, it was clear to all concerned that it was time for him to go. Once the decision to remove Pemberton had been made, the search for a suitable replacement began. Due to the delicate situation that existed in Charleston and the limited number of candidates then available, it was not until August 29 that Pemberton was superseded by General P.G.T. Beauregard. Pemberton was pleased to

leave Charleston, though he did so with his confidence shattered and his reputation somewhat tarnished. Still, the president stood by him and reassigned the general to command of the Department of Mississippi and East Louisiana. He departed Charleston in late September and the following month arrived at his new command in Jackson.

It is important also to note that when Pemberton assumed command of his new department, he was ordered by the president to report directly to him or to Secretary of War James A. Seddon. These orders were not rescinded, even after Davis appointed Johnston to supreme command in the West, and would have serious repercussions on the Confederate defense of Vicksburg.



South Carolina governor Francis Pickens (left) and General Robert E. Lee.

The second scene of the great tragedy is set in Vicksburg itself in December 1862. President Davis, responding to a request from Governor John J. Pettus that he visit Mississippi to help bolster the flagging morale of the people there, traveled to his home state. In order to help familiarize Johnston with his new department, Davis requested that the general accompany him on this trip. The presidential party arrived in Vicksburg on the evening of December 19 and was greeted by polite cheers. The two men spent the next two days inspecting the city's fortifications before going on to inspect Pemberton's army, then at Grenada in north Mississippi contesting the overland advance of Major General Ulysses S. Grant's Union army.

Returning to Jackson, Davis addressed the legislature the day after Christmas. "Whatever fortunes I may have achieved in life have been gained as a representative of Mississippi," he began, "and before all I have labored for the ad-

vancement of her glory and honor." The president spoke with eloquence: "I now, for the first time in my career, find myself the representative of a wider circle of interest, but a circle of which the interests of Mississippi are still embraced.... For, although in the discharge of my duties as President of the Confederate States I had determined to make no distinction between the various parts of the country—to know no separate state—yet my heart has always beat more warmly for Mississippi, and I have looked upon Mississippi soldiers with a pride and emotion such as no others inspired."

The legislators listened intently for any indication of how the government and, especially Davis himself, planned to assist the people of Mississippi in their hour of need. But only rhetoric flowed from his lips. "This was the land of my affections," Davis continued. "Here were situated the little of worldly goods I possessed.... But when I received dispatches and heard rumors of alarm and trepidation and despondency among the people of Mississippi; when I heard even, that people were fleeing to Texas in order to save themselves from the enemy; when I saw it stated by the enemy that

they had handled other states with gloves, but Mississippi was to be handled without gloves—every impulse of my heart dragged me hither, in spite of duties which might have claimed my attention elsewhere. When I heard of the sufferings of my own people, of the danger of their subjugation by a ruthless foe, I felt that if Mississippi were destined for such a fate, I would wish to sleep in her soil."

His grand and flowery phrases were meaningless, and the hopes of his listeners faded. The only statement of substance was a pledge to order additional pieces of heavy ordnance to Vicksburg, which all knew was not enough. Davis assured those who crowded the House chamber, "I can, then, say with every confidence that our condition is in every respect greatly improved over what it was last year." The president concluded his remarks with a statement hardly worthy of confidence: "I shall go away from you with a lighter heart... anxious, but hopeful." Although his speech was received

with polite applause, it certainly failed to assuage the fears of Mississippians, who braced themselves for what was to follow.¹⁰

As the applause slowly ebbed, shouts of "Johnston, Johnston" rang out. The general, who normally shied from public appearances, slowly approached the podium and addressed the audience in his customary manner. "Fellow citizens, my only regret is that I have done so little to merit such a greeting," he said, and proclaimed, "I promise you, however, that hereafter I shall be watchful, energetic, and indefatigable in your defense."¹¹ Events would prove otherwise.

What made the inspection tour so significant was the impression it left in the mind of each man. Davis was struck by the scope and strength of the fortifications that ringed Vicksburg and declared them formidable. Indeed, he thought they could never be taken. Thus, during the course of the campaign and especially throughout the period of siege, the Confederate president harbored little fear of the loss of Vicksburg despite increasingly gloomy reports emanating from Mississippi. A Davis biographer wrote that the president was "strangely uninvolved" in the affairs centered on Vicksburg. Believing the city to be an impregnable fortress and that time was on his side, Davis failed to heed the warnings, sent few reinforcements, and concentrated his attention on the campaigns in the East. In fact, Davis was shocked in July when he received word of the city's surrender. Incredulous, he asked repeatedly of those around him: "How could this be possible?"¹²

Unlike Davis, Johnston was unimpressed by the fortifications. To the contrary, he was disturbed that they embraced, what he termed, "the usual error of Confederate engineering." In his view Vicksburg was nothing but "[a]n immense intrenched camp, requiring an army to hold it, ... instead of a fort requiring only a small garrison." He compared Vicksburg to Fort Donelson, stating that it was nothing but an elaborate trap that would ensnare its defenders, and warned that if an army fell back into these defenses and allowed itself to be besieged, you could write it off. It was as good as lost.¹³

Consequently, with Davis focused on events elsewhere and Johnston unwilling to accept the mantle of command thrust



The storming of Fort Donelson by Union forces. Davis compared the defenses at Vicksburg to those at Fort Donelson—nothing but an elaborate trap that would ensnare its defenders.



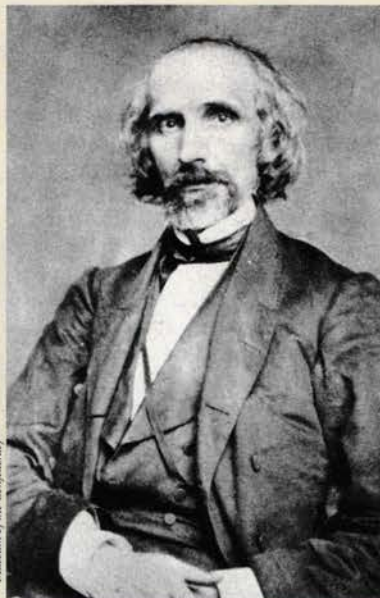
After the Confederate disaster at Champion Hill (above), Johnston ordered Pemberton to evacuate Vicksburg if it was "not too late."

upon him by the president, Pemberton was left to defend Vicksburg with plenty of contradictory advice, but precious little support from his superiors. Left to his own devices, Pemberton, in predictable fashion, managed his new department in much the same way he did his old at Charleston and experienced many of the same difficulties, especially in his dealings with elected officials and civilian populations. However, with Lee's admonition always in mind, he was determined to defend Vicksburg and Port Hudson to the last extremity—fighting street by street, and house by house, if need be.

The final scene of the great drama played out during the campaign itself. Following Grant's landing at Bruinsburg,

the situation facing Confederate forces in Mississippi quickly went from bad to worse. Davis ordered Johnston to the Magnolia State to salvage the rapidly deteriorating situation. Upon his arrival in Jackson on May 13 (the day before Union forces stormed the capital city), he quickly assessed the situation and informed the secretary of war, "I am too late." This statement was a reflection of the defeatism that has forever tarnished Johnston's Civil War career and came to characterize his operations relative to Vicksburg. Rather than fight for Jackson, Johnston ordered the city's evacuation, which effectively removed him and his army from the campaign.¹⁴

(In Johnston's defense, it must be said that at the time of the evacuation,



Female residents seek food at the U.S. Commissary in Vicksburg (left) and Secretary of War James A. Seddon.

he only had 6,000 men in Jackson. However, Confederate reinforcements were en route to the capital and by late afternoon his numbers would have increased to 10,000, with an additional 3,000 men expected on May 16. In light of the fortifications that ringed the capital and the expected reinforcements that would have placed him at only a two-to-one disadvantage, it is difficult to fathom why Johnston failed to prolong the fight for Jackson.)

As Johnston and his small force marched to the northeast toward Canton, he directed Pemberton to rendezvous with him at Clinton where, united, they could turn on Grant and defeat the Federal army in detail. But neither general moved toward that end. Rather, they marched in opposite directions and left the initiative with Grant. Then, in the aftermath of the disasters at Champion Hill and Big Black River Bridge, on May 16-17, Johnston ordered Pemberton: "If it is not too late, evacuate Vicksburg and its dependencies, and march to the northeast." Recalling his inspection tour in December, the Virginian warned his subordinate, "If...you are invested in Vicksburg, you must ultimately surrender. Under such circumstances, instead of losing both troops and place, we must, if possible, save the troops." Faced with the decision to evacuate the city and save his army, but lose Vicksburg, or to fall back into and man the city's fortifications, Pemberton opted for the latter. The soldiers under his command were thus destined to experience war in all its horrors during the

forty-seven-day siege of the city, trapped in a terrifying quest for survival.¹⁵

On May 19 and again on the 22nd, Grant hurled his forces against the city's defenses, only to be easily and bloodily repulsed. Settling into a war of attrition, Union forces encircled Vicksburg and worked to starve the garrison into submission. In order to conserve what food supplies were on hand, Pemberton ordered the daily ration cut to three quarters, then to half, and then to a quarter. Rations were then cut again, and again, and yet again. By the end of June the men of the garrison were each issued only a handful of peas and rice per day. Even their water had to be rationed.

In Vicksburg, the weeks slowly passed. Lieutenant William A. Drennan, a member of the besieged garrison, described life in the city in his diary: "Monotony does not convey all the sameness of these days imposes on one. There is a tension of nerves, an extreme anxiety, as you have experienced for a for a few moments and that you have felt—had you to endure it long, it would craze you." Two days later he wrote of the specter that overshadowed the monotony in Vicksburg and made the days so difficult to bear: "The mortality here at this time is very great; hardly a day passes but I see dozens of men carried to their homes. They are buried in a trench with a blanket for their shroud. Coffins cannot be had for all of them. Graves are dug today for use tomorrow."¹⁶

Throughout the month of June, as the Union vice closed ever tighter, con-

tact between Pemberton and Johnston relative to coordinated movements to save the garrison became less frequent. Growing difficulty in exchanging messages between the two generals led to delays. The breakdown in communications would have proved fatal to coordination, had coordination truly been the objective. Although Pemberton was desperate to be saved, the records clearly show that Johnston was equally desperate to avoid action. By June 3 the Army of Relief, as Johnston's force was known, numbered more than 30,000, which gave the combined Confederate armies a substantial numerical advantage over Grant. Still he complained to the authorities in Richmond that he

needed more men, more wagons, more horses, and more ammunition. The authorities sent what they could, but it was never enough—Johnston needed more, more, more.

Nothing could spur the Virginian into action. Davis and members of his cabinet urged Johnston to move quickly, none more forcefully than Secretary of War James A. Seddon, who admonished: "Vicksburg must not be lost without a desperate struggle. The interest and honor of the Confederacy forbid it." And yet, to the urging of his superiors and pleading by Pemberton, Johnston would only reply, "I am too weak to save Vicksburg."¹⁷

Whether he was or not we will never know, but the window of opportunity closed by mid-June, as tens of thousands of Federal reinforcements arrived in the Vicksburg area, thus sealing the doom of the beleaguered city. In despair, the Vicksburg commander on June 23 sent a communication to Johnston suggesting that the Virginian propose terms for surrender of the city to Grant. Pemberton added, "I will strain every nerve to hold out, if there is hope of our ultimate relief, for fifteen days longer." Johnston replied on June 27, four precious days later, "Negotiations with Grant for relief of the garrison, should they become necessary, must be made by you. It would be a confession of weakness on my part, which I ought not to make, to propose them. When it becomes necessary to make terms, they may be considered as made under my authority." Yet despite know-

ing of the dire situation in Vicksburg, Johnston delayed another four days before he finally set his Jackson force in motion on July 1 toward the Confederate Gibraltar on the Mississippi River. By then, it was too late.¹⁸

Johnston determined to fall back to Jackson. Thus the Army of Relief became an army on the run.

Morale within the army sank as the gray columns headed east back to the capital city. The sun beat down unmer-

Vicksburg to fall without making an attempt to save the city and its garrison, his military reputation would be destroyed and his career finished; and yet, he did not want to face Grant's forces in pitched battle. Thus, he delayed as long as he thought prudent to save his reputation without risking the possibility of battle.) And finally John Pemberton, the Pennsylvanian in gray who was plagued by "indecision, indecision, indecision." In his attempt to serve two masters—Davis and Johnston—he failed both, and in so doing brought disaster and disgrace upon himself and the Confederacy.¹⁹

Time, however, heals most wounds and the bitter feelings engendered by the war and the Reconstruction period that followed eventually mellowed. In 1917 approximately 8,000 veterans of the blue and gray attended what was known as the National Memorial Celebration and Peace Jubilee in Vicksburg. On the final day of the reunion there was a parade during which the aged veterans rode in trucks through the city's streets, lined by thousands of spectators. The city was festooned with red, white, and blue bunting (which of course represented both sides during the conflict), and pictures of "Our Heroes": Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, and Robert E. Lee. Conspicuous by the absence of their pictures were Joseph E. Johnston and John C. Pemberton, the two generals who had conducted the defense of Vicksburg.

As evidenced by the ever-expanding field of literature on the Vicksburg Campaign, history is harsh to those who fail. History can also be brutally cold toward those who blunder. The greater the failure the more intense the cold. Mercifully, though, history can also forget and forgive. In the case of the Confederate high command, especially the two generals responsible for the defense and relief of Vicksburg, history has all but forgotten. For John C. Pemberton, the general who tried and failed, and Joseph E. Johnston, the general who failed to try, it remains to be seen if history will ever forgive. □

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Pemberton and Grant meet on July 3, 1863, to arrange the terms of Vicksburg's surrender.

On July 3, as his advance units neared the Big Black River, an eerie silence settled over the area—the sound of cannon fire from Vicksburg ceased. Although only twelve days had passed, rather than the fifteen Pemberton had pledged when he penned the dire warning of imminent catastrophe, Johnston knew beyond doubt that the silence indicated the defenders of Vicksburg had reached the limits of human endurance. In fact, at that very moment, Pemberton and Grant met between the lines in the shade of a stunted oak, at which time the Confederate commander requested of his opponent the terms by which he would receive the surrender of the city and garrison of Vicksburg.

Johnston spent much of July 4 examining the reports sent in by scouts while his men remained in camp. He realized the futility of attempting to force a crossing of the Big Black River north of the railroad, in the face of an entrenched enemy, and reasoned that there might be a soft spot in the Federal fortifications somewhere below the tracks. Johnston, therefore, resolved to explore the region south of the railroad. But before his troops took up the line of march on July 5 the fears of all were confirmed with the news of Vicksburg's surrender. Worried that Grant would now turn on him,

cifully on the Confederates and the thick clouds of dust that swirled around the marching men made it difficult to breathe. Adding to their misery was an acute shortage of water that prevented them from soothing parched throats. Despite the hardships suffered on the way, the columns moved quickly, aware that the Union army would soon be snapping at their heels.

In predictable fashion, Johnston also abandoned Jackson, but in this case it was certainly justified. On July 17, as his columns headed east across the Pearl River, Union soldiers once more filled the streets of Jackson, bringing to a close what was perhaps the most mismanaged campaign in Confederate history.

Though Grant deserves all the credit he has received for the great triumph at Vicksburg, his victory was due in part to the failure of three men who could not, or would not, exercise unity of command. Jefferson Davis acted as the proverbial ostrich. He placed his head in the sand and hoped the problem would be solved by those he had charged with the defense of Vicksburg. Joe Johnston was a stubborn mule who, despite orders, refused to budge and could not be coaxed, cajoled, or threatened into moving. (The author is so bold as to suggest that Johnston realized that if he permitted

clude: *Triumph & Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign* (Savas Publishing, 1998); *The Civil War Diary of a Common Soldier* (LSU Press, 2001); and *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

NOTES:

1. FM-100-5, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, May 5, 1986, p. 176. In June 2001, FM 100-5 was replaced by FM 3-0, which discusses the principles of war, including unity of command, on pages 4-11 through 4-15.
2. Haskell M. Monroe and James T. McIntosh, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Vol. 1, 1808-1840 (Baton Rouge, 1971), p. 297.
3. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, February 21, 1861; *New York Herald*, February 23, 1861. The general information provided in this articles comes from a number of sources including: William C. Davis, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (New York, 1991) and William Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York, 2000).
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5. John C. Pemberton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; Michael Ballard, *Pemberton: A Biography* (Jackson, 1991), p. 86. Ballard's book was reprinted in 1999 and released under the title, *Pemberton: The General Who Lost Vicksburg*. Other sources used in compiling this general information on Pemberton are: *Pemberton: Defender of Vicksburg* by John C. Pemberton III (Chapel Hill, 1942) and *Compelled to Appear in Print: The Vicksburg Manuscript of General John C. Pemberton* edited by David Smith (Cincinnati, 1999).
6. Ballard, *Pemberton*, pp. 90-91.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 100; U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1890-1901), series 1, vol. 53, p. 247. (Hereafter cited as O.R.; all references are to series 1 unless otherwise noted.)
9. O.R., vol. 14, pp. 523-524.
10. The excerpts of Davis' speech that appear in this article are taken from Shelby

Footes, *The Civil War: A Narrative*, 3 vols. (New York, 1958-1974), vol. 2, pp. 13-16.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
12. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, p. 502.
13. Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed During the Late War Between the States* (New York, 1874), p. 152.
14. O.R., vol. 24, pt. 1, p. 215.
15. O.R., vol. 24, pt. 3, p. 888.
16. Diary of Lt. William A. Drennan, copy, Letters and Diaries File, Vicksburg National Military Park.
17. O. R., vol. 24, pt. 3, p. 967.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 974, 980.
19. Diary of John A. Leavy, Letters and Diaries File, Vicksburg National Military Park. Leavy was a surgeon in the famed Confederate Missouri Brigade who penned this description of Pemberton in the pages of his diary on May 16, 1863—the day of the Battle of Champion Hill. Champion Hill was the largest, bloodiest, and most significant action of the campaign in which Pemberton's army was routed and driven from the field in panic and confusion. Victory at Champion Hill solidly established Grant's army between Pemberton and Johnston, thus hindering their concert of action for the duration of the campaign.



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How shall we grace the day?
With feast and song, and dance, and antique sports,
And shouts of happy children in the courts,
And tales of ghost and fay?

* * *

How could we bear the mirth,
While some loved reveler of a year ago
Keeps his mute Christmas now beneath the snow,
In cold Virginian earth?¹

—Henry Timrod, "Christmas"

Above: "Christmas in the South" by William Ludwell Sheppard, which appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, December 31, 1870.

REMEMBERING SLAVE CHRISTMAS TIMES from the vantage point of the early twentieth century, the prominent African-American educator Booker T. Washington briefly noted how what once had been a festive day—with reunions of separated black families, presents, and genuine joy within the black community—had transformed under the hardships of the Civil War. Misleadingly referring to the Virginia farm where he spent his boyhood as a plantation, Washington nonetheless accurately summed up what was going on throughout the Confederacy when he recalled that the slaves on his place during the war "felt the pinch of hard times."²

Washington's musings might be dismissed as of little consequence. What does it matter if slaves, for a few years, enjoyed less Christmas bounty than they had received during antebellum times? After all, soon they would be free. Yet Washington's recollection is fraught with meaning for the disintegration of Confederate society and the South's ultimate loss in the Civil War. Historians and popular writers have expended consider-

able effort uncovering how white and black Southerners celebrated Christmas before the Civil War, especially those living on a large plantation with a "big house"—or mansion. But they have paid little attention to how the holiday was observed under the deprivations of wartime and the threat or actuality of Union occupation, thereby missing a very revealing story.

To understand what transpired during the Civil War, one must consider just how important a day in terms of slave-master relations Christmas had been in the calendar years of the Old South. Although some masters whipped or sold slaves during the Christmas season and treated their workers little differently than they did during the balance of the year, slaveowners more typically included their chattels within holiday planning. The twentieth-century black author Margaret Walker captures both meanings of antebellum Christmases for slaves in her novel *Jubilee*, in a chapter entitled "There's a star in the East on Christmas morn," when she evokes the anger of a pregnant slave who is disappointed by her master in her holiday hopes of marrying a free black and being emancipated, but also portrays the holiday as the most joyous day for blacks on the plantation calendar.³

As Washington hinted when he reported that Virginia slaves enjoyed a holiday that lasted "a week, sometimes longer," Christmas provided by far the longest relief that most slaves received from their work cycle. But the holiday represented more than a reprieve from labor. During the Christmas season, many masters allowed slaves who worked at detached properties that they owned or who had been hired out for the year to rejoin their families for a few days. They also allowed slave marriages that had been deferred, especially during the rush of fall harvests, to occur, often as part of a succession of parties that included much singing, dancing, and the playing of games. Further, masters indeed conferred presents on their laborers (especially house servants), both hand-me-downs and items purchased thoughtfully at stores, and provided all hands with elaborate feasts that generally included copious amounts of liquor. Thus John A. Seldon, who owned the famous Westover estate on the James River in Virginia, reported in his journal on the last pre-Civil War Christmas:

Wednesday. Xmas day: fine day. Attended church, which was beautifully dressed up with evergreens. Had large congregation. Gave my negroes 350 lbs. of bacon and beef, 2 lbs. of super-fine flour, 1 pint of molasses each, lard, etc., for their Xmas.⁴

Some of the gifts were distributed as part of a widespread custom known as "Christmas Gif." According to the rules of this quasi-game, white and slave residents of the mansion house were expected to shout "Christmas Gif" upon first sighting each other on Christmas morning. The one who got the words out first was to receive a present from the other.⁵

Most importantly, before the Civil War, the holiday carried a kind of psychological payoff for both master and slave. Naturally, the feasting and break from normal routines helped provide many slaves with the emotional (and perhaps nutritional) restoration essential to making it through the many months of hard labor and tyrannical discipline to come. But the respite was equally crucial for the master's self-esteem, at a time that Southern slavery was under withering criticism from Northern and British abolitionists. By providing their laborers with boun-

tiful Christmases, masters acted out the paternalistic roles prescribed by Southern proslavery propaganda. They could internalize maxims that Southern masters governed slaves for their laborers' own welfare, and use feasts and gift-giving as evidence that they kept their workers' health and happiness in mind even as they pursued the profits accrued from forced labor. Thus masters rarely, if ever, wanted or tried to win their Christmas Gif competition with slaves: slaves hardly had the resources to fulfill the obligations of losers. Rather, masters welcomed defeat, so that they could further confirm their professed benevolence by conferring extra presents. Without Christmas ceremonies, masters would have found it harder to accept slavery's evils at other times. When slaves accepted gifts and expressed joy at Christmas feasts, masters assumed that their labor system was reciprocally appreciated on both sides. As the prominent historian William W. Freehling has put it, ostentatious Christmas ceremonies from the master's point of view amounted to "annual paternalistic reelections."⁶



African-American educator Booker T. Washington.

After the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861 and the beginning of Yankee military campaigns in Dixie, it became more crucial than ever for masters to maintain the Christmas season customs that slaves were accustomed to in antebellum times, lest their disappearance trigger slave labor stoppages, resistance, and escapes. For one thing, most white males were away at the war, making the maintenance of labor discipline and racial control in the household, on the plantation, and within local communities far more problematic than in the past. An astounding percentage of the South's potential white military manpower served in the Southern armies, calculated at between seventy-five and eighty-five percent by the historian Gary Gallagher. Not only did many white slaveowners and their male



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From the Blair Family Papers, Library of Congress



From The Civil War Diary of Sarah Morgan

James Henry Hammond (left), Varina Davis (center), wife of the Confederate president, and Sarah Morgan (right).

relations and overseers volunteer for Confederate military service, but relatively few in the slaveowning class took advantage of clauses in the several Confederate draft laws permitting the buying of substitutes and the exemption of one plantation white for every twenty (ultimately fifteen) slaves owned. As of the end of 1863, Confederate authorities had exempted fewer than one thousand men in all the Southeast under these provisions.⁷ Second, the proximity of Union lines in many areas of the Confederacy served as an enticement for numerous slaves, who would not have taken the risk in times of peace, to attempt their escape from bondage. Long before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, thousands of slaves attempted their own liberation, hoping that Union troops would provide them with protection, sustenance, and freedom.

By providing expected gifts and carrying on traditional Christmas family and plantation customs, slaveholding mistresses and Southern white males remaining on the home front promoted a pretense of normality that potentially might stave off black resistance and flight. Former South Carolina governor and U.S. senator James Henry Hammond, for example, reported in his journal on the Confederacy's first Christmas that he had distributed a dozen bottles of wine to each of his plantations "to add to the enjoyment of the people" and that he had given a whole bottle to every adult at "Redcliffe," his home place. He likely provided similar libations exactly a year later, because in 1862 he mentioned in his immediate post-Christmas entries that his slaves were "enjoying themselves backwards & forwards" and that his "Negroes" were "still dancing." Similarly, in eastern North Carolina, Caroline Pettigrew gave all the slaves on Christmas Day 1863 an extra supply of pork sausages and other food, which she said left them "very much pleased and smiling."

So long as everything seemed normal, most slaves acted out their prescribed scripts for the Christmas season, hailing

their masters with friendly holiday greetings. Thus a Georgia slaveowner reported on Christmas 1861 to his son, an artillery officer in the Confederate army, that soon after sunrise that day the servants "came with their 'Merry Christmas.'"⁸ Meanwhile,

throughout Dixie, screams of "Christmas Gif" still rang out on the holiday morning. In Natchez, Mississippi, Louisa Lovell, the daughter of a former governor of Mississippi who had died three years earlier, informed her husband (then away in the Confederate army) on New Year's Day 1862 that she had given "the darkies all holiday" for the days following Christmas, and that she had gone to great lengths to overcome wartime shortages and scrounge up presents of used clothing for the servants at Monmouth, the family home, so that nothing would seem amiss on Christmas morning:

I ransacked the garret for something to meet the ever recurring greeting of "Christmas gift miss!" as I dared not brave them empty handed. Many ancient garments were brought to light ... amid the dust and moths, to bedeck our sable damsels and matrons. The greatest prize was a gaily colored dressing gown, resembling much an astrologer's mantle, that now enfolds the long long form of Jamison.⁹

Plantation holiday observances and public celebrations in many Southern cities and towns further implied continuities from prewar times. Sarah Morgan, the daughter of a Louisiana attorney and office-holder who owned eight slaves according to the 1860 census, could hardly have had a more uplifting Christmas than the one that she passed at a plantation in East Feliciana Parish. Her family was serenaded by Confederate officers, with whom she and her sister flirted competitively. Many gifts were exchanged, and amid much hilarity and music a Santa Claus wearing an old Mexican War uniform and a "preposterous beard of false hair" distributed cakes and filled wine glasses. In a diary jotted from the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, Confederate government clerk John B. Jones reported that "Chinese crackers" were being set off everywhere and that many guns were being fired to celebrate the holiday. In some parts of the unoccupied South, joyous celebrations of Christmas persisted to the very end of the war. Eugene Levy, a Jewish

volunteer from New Orleans, spent Christmas 1864 with civilians in the Richmond area dressing a Christmas tree and devouring a "sumptuous" holiday repast that included mutton, turkey, pork, vegetables, and a "delicious dessert." Even Varina Davis, the wife of the embattled Confederate president, managed on that same last Confederate Christmas to come up with eggnog and gifts for every servant.¹⁰

Ultimately, of course, all this broke down in many slaveholding households. The Union blockade, enemy attacks on Southern transportation networks and occupation of many cities and much of the countryside, and the impressing of produce and farm stock by Confederate authorities, severely restricted the supply of household items in many locales, or drove the costs so high that many slaveowners could not afford their customary purchases. In some parts of the Confederacy, shortages were the norm as early as December 1861, with one newspaper poem of the time not only capturing the dearth of edibles on many holiday tables but also how the absences of many males in the Confederate army, or the deaths that they had already suffered, cast a pall over whatever celebrating was possible:

No festive garlands now we twine
For walls all echoless;
No viands rare and costly wine
Our vacant boards oppress;
The empty chairs at every hearth,
With sad suggestions banish mirth.¹¹

By mid-war, such constricting of Christmas was commonplace throughout Dixie. Thus James Hammond noted in December 1863 that he had not provided his slaves with their usual Christmas barbecue, while clerk Jones in Richmond reported a "sad" holiday: not only did he lack the funds to decorate the cedar Christmas tree that he had obtained, he also was apparently unable to afford candy at the going price—\$8 a pound. With an obvious heavy heart, he lamented, "A few pistols and crackers are fired by the boys in the streets—and only a few." And a year later Henri Garidel, a Catholic who had fled the Union occupation of New Orleans for the Confederate capital, described attending mass and then trying to swallow a "very bad" Christmas dinner of nothing more than "a boiled dish" and some soup, white peas, and two-week-old soda biscuits. But Dolly Lunt Burge of Morgan County, Georgia, best exposed the pathos of mid- and late-war Confederate Christmases in diary entries that not only bemoaned the absence of the usual candy, pies, and cakes on her Christmas table, but also vividly described the agony of being a slave mistress who could not come through with the usual presents for black household servants. On Christmas morning, she explained, the "little negroes all came in 'Christmas gift Mistress Christmas gift Mistress' I pulled the cover over my face & was soon...[in] tears."¹²

Even had masters been able to produce for their slaves the gifts, food, and liquor that they had become accustomed to receiving at Christmas, the slaves would have sensed that things were amiss within Southern households because of the war. As the earlier newspaper poem suggests, many Southern whites made little effort or found it impossible to hide their sorrow at Christmas about family members who either had died in the Confederate ranks or who were absent in the army, often using the metaphor of the vacant chair for their missing menfolk.

Sallie Putnam reminisced after the war about how Christmas 1861 was the saddest Christmas she had experienced, with people lacking even the "inclination" to "make the week merry with joyousness when such a sad calamity hovered over us." Christmas greetings, she recalled, merely preceded "anxious inquiries for dear boys in the field." Many surviving Confederate civilian letters and diaries attest to the accuracy of Putnam's memory. As Elizabeth Neblett of Grimes County, Texas, wrote on Christmas night 1863 to her husband in the Confederate army, "Altho' the Almanac proclaims this day to be Christmas, yet, there is no external nor internal sign of a holiday or rejoicing in my heart. I remember what a long weary year has already passed."¹³

Furthermore, although Confederate civilians in some locales resigned themselves to Union occupation and even graciously entertained Federal soldiers, especially officers, for the holidays, many Southerners found their Christmas observances seriously compromised by the prox-



Right: In this "Santa Claus Lincoln" cartoon, the president is offering Jefferson Davis a Christmas gift of an olive wreath or a sword. Either way, the rebellion would end.



An artistic rendition of Santa Claus in a Union army camp. While Federal troops observed Christmas at the front, their presence in the South helped disrupt traditional celebrations there.

imity of Union troops. The Winchester, Virginia, small slaveowner Cornelia McDonald, for instance, reported in her diary for Christmas Eve 1862 how local shops had closed in anticipation of the advent of Yankee troops, and that when the Federals actually showed up some of the soldiers stole her already dressed turkey, seized a pan of hot holiday rusks (sweetened rolls) out of her stove, and ripped up her garden fence and outbuildings for firewood. One Union surgeon even had the gall to demand supper and appropriate the rocking chair in her dining room as a place to rest. McDonald got the turkey back by threatening its pilferer that she would complain to his officer, and she forced the rusk thief to drop the pan by pulling insistently on his coat collar. Moreover, the surgeon eventually took his leave when she temporarily left the house. But her small triumphs hardly made it a pleasant Christmas. As she reflected about the holiday turmoil, McDonald concluded that the day had been "too restless to enjoy, or even to realize that it was Christmas." She and her family were so lacking in appetite, and so excited by reports that Confederate forces were arriving to drive the Yanks away, that they stored much of what was remaining of their intended Christmas meal. Many other Confederate civilians endured similar encounters. The next Christmas, for instance, the Pennsylvania native Emilie Riley McKinley, who tutored planter children near Vicksburg, Mississippi, reported how a pleasant Christmas Day of eggnog, cakes, and gift-giving had been marred by a visit from Yankee soldiers, including a "contemptible" New York abolitionist who talked so interminably that it seemed he would never leave, and also how the Union occupation commander in Vicksburg had expelled from the city five local women who walked out of Christmas services rather than obey the minister's call on them to pray for President Lincoln. On December 25, 1864, after Union general William Tecumseh Sherman captured Savannah (telegraphing President Lincoln memorably that he was presenting the city to the chief executive as a "Christmas gift") and occupation authorities forced the Cohen family to turn over their family home on Lafayette Square to one of Sherman's subordinate generals, Fanny Cohen lamented in her diary that it had been the "saddest Christmas" she had ever experienced.¹⁴

Slaves would have had to have been obtuse to ignore the implications of all this—that the slaveholders' regime was literally disintegrating before their eyes, day-by-day. Many slaves had witnessed the bravado with which Confederate recruits had mustered to fight Yankee armies. Thus a professor at Mercer University in Georgia observed on Christmas Day following Lincoln's election that not only many of the local white population had turned out to observe a drill of the Dawson Grays, a newly formed volunteer infantry company, but so too had "quite a crowd of darkeys who were much delighted." But within months, in many cases, slaves received signals of the difficulties that white Confederates were encountering in their bid for independence. The transformation was startling. At the very least, the lack of normal Christmas munificence, one of the very few paybacks they got for their labor, depressed many of them. One reads this reaction into James Hammond's observation in 1863 that there were "no smiling faces & merry hearts" after he denied his slaves their customary barbecue. Despondency, in turn, produced surliness and resistance. Thus the historian Wayne Durrill has observed in a study of Washington, North Carolina,

during the war that the planters' inability to come through with their usual Christmas season distributions of new shoes and winter clothes in 1863 led to work stoppages that lasted until spring plowing season. And the juxtaposition of nearby Union lines in many areas at the same time made the slaves' continued position as forced laborers especially intolerable.¹⁵



Residents scramble for cover as a shell fired by Union forces explodes in Charleston on Christmas Day 1863.



"Preparing for Christmas" by Thomas Worth. An African-American man gets ready to chop off the head of a turkey while three children watch. *Harper's Weekly*, December 26, 1868.

It would be stretching the point to attribute Confederate defeat directly to the wartime disintegration of Southern Christmas observances. Emily Lyles Harris, managing a family farm about eight miles from Spartanburg, South Carolina, while her husband was away in the Confederate service, recorded in her journal that several of her slaves chose the holiday season to depart, and that others who had her permission to visit elsewhere had neglected to return on time. But it is unclear whether Southern slaves as a whole were statistically more likely to choose Christmas to run away during the Civil War than during the prewar years. Further, as the illustrious Civil War historian James M. McPherson reminds us, Dixie's battlefield defeats, not set-

backs on her home front, provide the best explanation for the Civil War's eventual result.¹⁶

Nonetheless, approximately 135,000 former Southern male slaves joined the Union army during the Civil War, and fought in many of the most important battles and campaigns of the war, especially in its last two years. Countless other slaves of both sexes still ostensibly under their owners' thumbs rendered additional assistance subversively—such as by helping escaped Yankee war prisoners return to Union lines and by providing important information to Union army and navy officers. Many modern historians believe that the Civil War either would not have been won at all by the North, or that the victory would have been delayed considerably, had it not been for the African American contributions to the Union military effort. Therefore it is crucial also that we not understate the importance of the developments on the home front that triggered slaves' decisions to flee. And clearly, widespread curtailments of customary Christmas celebrations played an important part in the cumulative disaffection that explained a number of these individual decisions. On many Southern plantations and in many Southern slaveholding households, few wartime events were more disheartening to the slaves than the unanticipated deprivations that occurred during the Christmas season. Decisions to escape bondage generally reflected a variety of factors, but countless Southern slaves felt especially shortchanged by their masters at Christmas, concluding that their masters had failed in their reciprocal obligations. We can safely assume that recollections of Christmas deficiencies played into the calculations of many slaves that they had little to lose by attempting to reach Union lines.

Ironically, of course, many slaves often found that Christmas on the other side was not that much better, or even as bountiful, as it had been during bondage. True, they now had an entirely new take on the holiday. From the Union-occupied Sea Islands off the South Carolina coast on Christmas Day 1862, the Northern teacher Laura M. Towne reported that the words "His People Are Free" had been prominently posted across from the church's pulpit for a holiday service. Two years later at Christmas, she indirectly attested to the former slaves appropriating white Christmas behavior by the conferring of presents across racial lines. After she gave an African-American woman a shawl, tea, and sugar for Christmas, the woman had reciprocated with groundnuts and sweet potatoes. But many newly freed blacks found Union lines anything but paradise. As another Northern teacher observed from the Sea Islands, the former slaves, though they were now making money for their labor, were prone to contrasting the high prices being demanded for clothing by Yankee merchants on the islands "with the old time when their masters gave them 'a whole suit at Christmas.'"¹⁷ In fact, dissatisfaction with the initial conditions of freedom, especially the Union government's failure to provide the forty acres and a mule that many former slaves thought they had coming as the war drew to its close, led to so much rumbling among African Americans across the South that many Southern whites and Federal authorities alike genuinely anticipated black insurrections timed for Christmas Day 1865. Thus, in the Mississippi Delta, white planter Everard G. Baker claimed in a pre-Christmas letter that black soldiers in the Union army had been warning slaves that they would be reenslaved unless they massacred the whole white

population, which in turn would give the North the opportunity to turn over all the Delta to blacks "as an inheritance."¹⁸

The rebellion (like several rumored Christmastime plots before the Civil War) never actually transpired, though some Southern blacks did take steps to reclaim a few of their prewar Christmas privileges. For instance, in the cane fields of Louisiana, when free black workers contracted with white landowners for the 1866 planting season, they insisted on and succeeded in obtaining a lengthening of their accustomed Christmas break to include most of the month of January.¹⁹ Still, postwar white nightmares of black insurrections at Christmas remind us that both races in the South traditionally attributed a special significance to the holiday season. By this very token, the disintegration of Christmas celebrations profoundly played havoc with the Confederacy's bid for national independence. □

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THIS ISSUE'S FRONT COVER FEATURES "ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS" by John Paul Strain. The painting depicts Confederate officers John Pelham, J.E.B. Stuart, Thomas ("Stonewall") Jackson, and Robert E. Lee riding near Fredericksburg in the winter of 1863. They are returning from Sunday services, held at one of the number of log chapels built around town by the men of the Stonewall Brigade.

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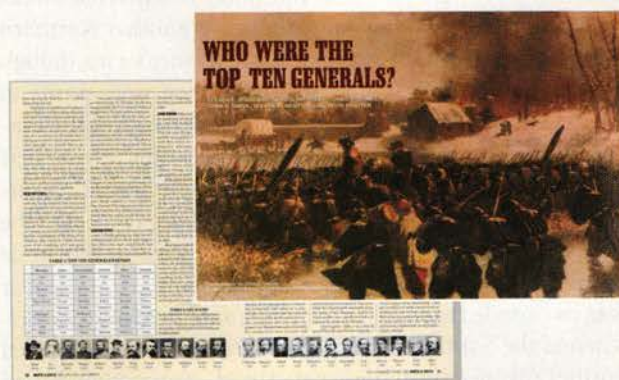
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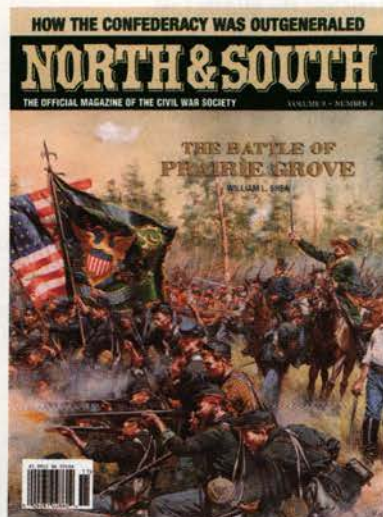
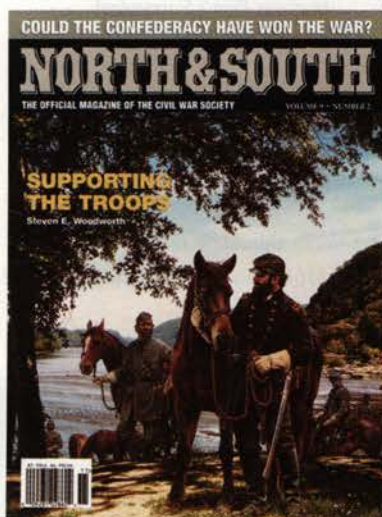
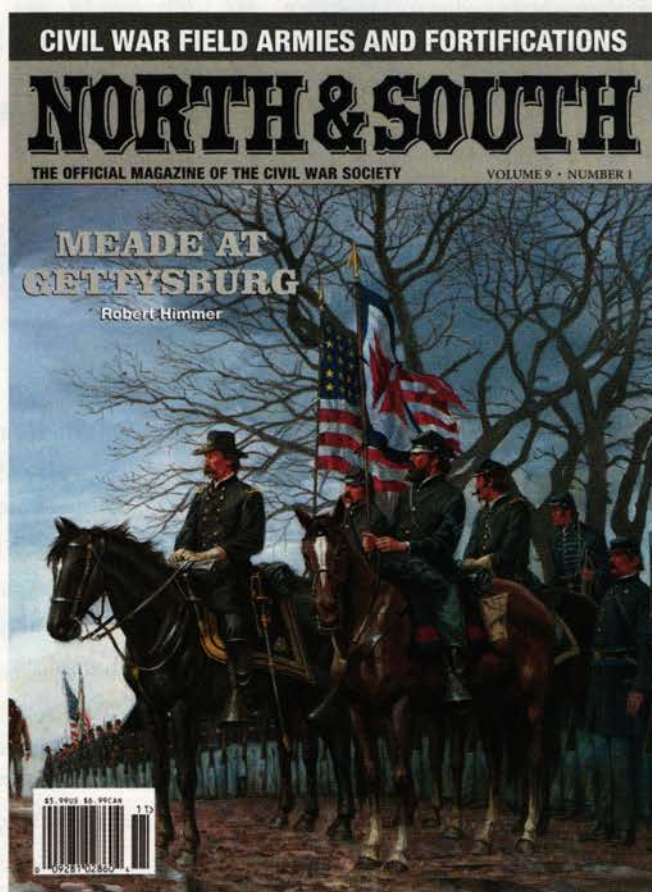
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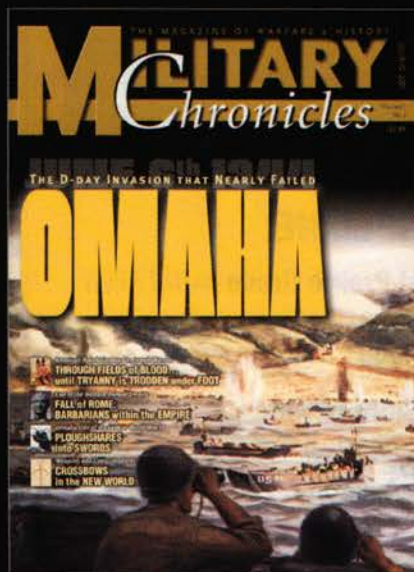


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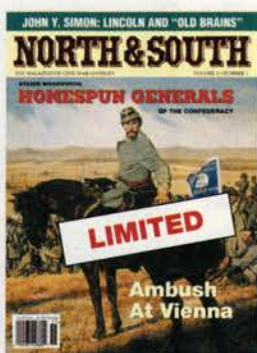
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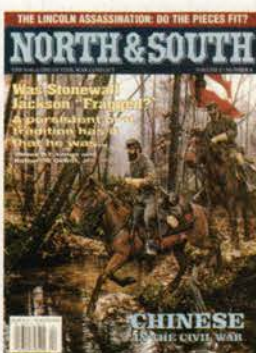
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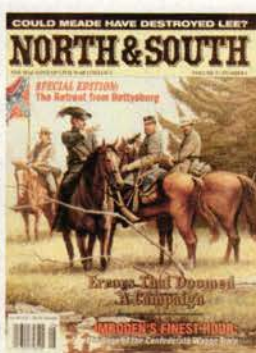
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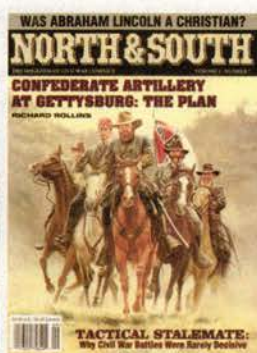
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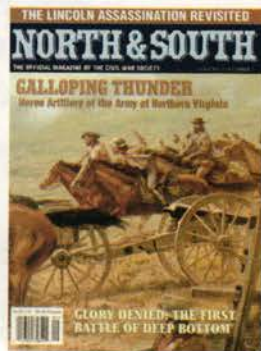


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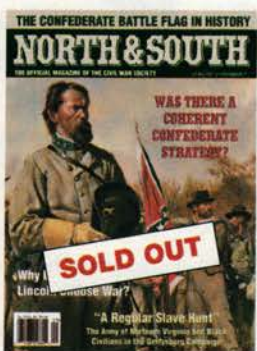


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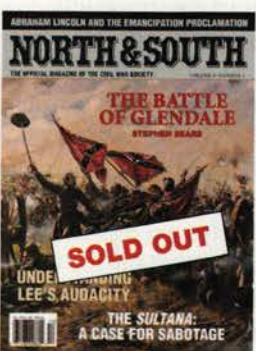
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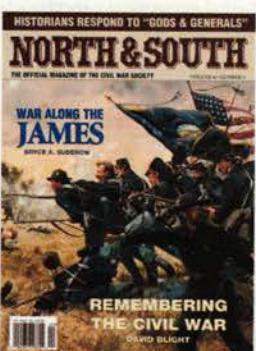
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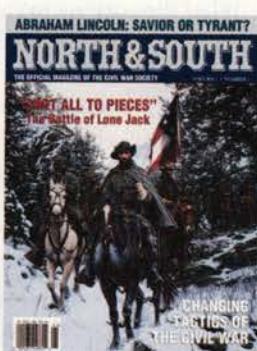
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The War Between the Names

What Should the American War of 1861 to 1865 Be Called?

John M. Coski

WHAT'S IN A NAME? A lot, it seems, when the subject is the American War of 1861-1865. One reader of this magazine responded to an article published in 2001 by historian James McPherson about the causes of the war with the parenthetical note that Civil War was the wrong name for the conflict because a civil war "is a war between two groups fighting for control of the same country or nation.... THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE was between two separate countries as evidenced by the documents of parole for my ancestors which mention specifically the United States of America and the Confederate States of America."¹ Many other readers and students of the subject share the strongly held conviction that the customary name Civil War is objectionable because it suggests something inaccurate about the origins and nature of the conflict.

What then are we to call it? There is no shortage of alternatives. Historian Jay Hoar counted 126 different names given to the war by contemporaries, historians, and wags.² Only a handful of these names figure into the modern dialogue about the war or are offered up as candidates by people determined that the war be called by its *correct* name. Usually with tongue in cheek, Southerners will insist that it was the "War of Northern Aggression" and Northerners will retaliate by citing the name found on the tattered spines of the *Official Records* volumes: "War of the Rebellion."

For more than a century, the dialogue has centered on the appropriateness of the consensus name Civil War versus the Southern alternative, War between the States.³ As the aforementioned letter to the editor of *North & South*

stated succinctly, Civil War is objectionable to those who contend that the Southern states had legitimately reclaimed their sovereignty and formed a new, separate federation. Civil War is erroneous because the war of 1861-1865 was, in effect, a war between separate nations, not a war within one nation. Use of Civil War denies the Confederacy legitimacy as a separate nation and passes negative judgment on the legality of secession. The rivalry between these names for the war is more than a century old and carries enormous ideological implications.

The starting point for any investigation into the subject is a seminal article by University of Georgia historian E. Merton Coulter published in the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* in 1952. Coulter identified the names that contemporaries, memoirists, and historians used for the war. He noted that the participants in the conflict evidenced little interest in bestowing an official name upon what they usually called "the war," although Northerners most often termed it "the rebellion." Acknowledging Civil War as the closest thing to an official name for the war, the self-described unreconstructed Coulter expressed his own preference for either "War for Confederate Independence" or "War Against the States," which, he believed, accurately summarized the war's effect in centralizing power in the national government.⁴

Almost any book that quotes from wartime primary sources reveals at least occasional use of "civil war." For example, Edward Ayers' 2003 work *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (the book I am reading as I write this article) quotes several Staunton, Virginia, newspapers in 1860-1861 warning variously that the political



crisis "would lead directly and inevitably to disunion and civil war" or cautioning the North that "though civil war may rage," Virginia would support her sister Southern states. Even the future Confederate general, John Imboden, wrote in December 1860, "I expect Civil War before the 1st of June."⁵

During the secession winter of 1860-1861, Americans surveyed the national scene and worried about the prospects of war. Several notable Southerners described the feared conflict using a term that their descendants later rejected as inappropriate: civil war.



Library of Congress

Raphael Semmes, who after the war helped popularize “War between the States,” wrote in February 1861 as he prepared to tender his resignation from the U.S. Navy that “Civil War is a terrible crucible through which to pass character.”⁶

“I see no cause of disunion, strife, and civil war and pray it may be averted,” penned Robert E. Lee in a letter to a friend on January 22, 1861. The following day he wrote to his family: “As far as I can judge by the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war.”⁷

The day before he regretfully resigned his seat in the U.S. Senate in Janu-

ary 1861, Lee’s future commander-in-chief, Jefferson Davis, worried that Abraham Lincoln would pursue a policy that would “inaugurate a civil war....”⁸ Davis’ closest friend in the Confederate cabinet, Judah P. Benjamin, warned northern Republicans that the inevitable consequences of their actions would be a “horrible contest” with “all the horrors of servile insurrection” added “to the calamities of civil war....”⁹

After the war had begun in April 1861, Virginia governor John Letcher—who had tried mightily to prevent his state from seceding—wrote angrily to President Abraham Lincoln: “You have chosen to inaugurate civil war, and having done so, we will meet it, in a spirit as determined as the Administration has exhibited towards the South.”¹⁰

These men used the term civil war even though they knew that the South-

ern states did not intend to fight for control of the government in Washington or have any pretense to governing the states of the North. Clearly, they did not believe that the meaning of civil war was limited to a war for control of the same government or nation.

The 1858 revised edition of Webster's dictionary defined a civil war as "a war between the people of the same state or city; opposed to a *foreign war*."¹¹ In 1860-1861, except for constitutional theorists and ideologues, most Americans, even southern Americans, were accustomed to thinking of the United States as one country, at least in relation to the rest of the world. Civil War appeared an appropriate designation for a war seemingly destined to occur within the borders of their country.

During the war years, civil war continued to be one of the most frequent names that Southern and especially Northern observers applied informally to the conflict. As Coulter noted, most observers referred to the conflict simply as "the war." The *Official Records* includes hundreds of uses of civil war in its 128 volumes (and only one of "war between the states," to be discussed later). Many of those uses were specific and restricted to guerrilla warfare or fighting among civilians in a localized region. Correspondents warned against the outbreak of civil war in deeply divided areas such as East Tennessee and Kentucky, between the rival factions of the Cherokee Indians, and even between citizens of opposing sentiments in California and Oregon.¹²

But federal civilian and military officials also used civil war in the more generic sense—suggesting merely the existence of warfare within the borders of what had been the United States of America. "We are in civil war," declared Abraham Lincoln to a committee of citizens in October 1863. Major General Henry W. Halleck distinguished between the deepening "border contest" in Missouri and the "civil war" in which the nation was engaged. Major General William T. Sherman wrote of the "civil war [that] prevails upon this land..." Secretary of State William H. Seward referred often in his diplomatic correspondence to "the present unhappy civil war."¹³

Seward's British counterparts also characterized the American war as a "civil war." Foreign Secretary John Russell referred in his instructions to Ambassador

Lord Lyons to "the present civil war in North America" and in Parliament to "this civil war... in America."¹⁴

Southerners used civil war with far less frequency than their Northern and British contemporaries, but they did use it. General P.G.T. Beauregard complained to Major General Quincy Gillmore in July 1863 that the Federal pillaging of towns and cities violated the laws of nations. Quoting the Swiss authority Vattel, Beauregard noted that the prohibition is "equally applicable to the

operations of a civil war." Confederate secretary of state R. M. T. Hunter complained in his correspondence with his ministers, James M. Mason and John Slidell, that "the occurrence of civil war had interfered with the establishment of Southern economic and diplomatic arrangements."¹⁵ "Ah, cruel civil war!" despaired the young, fervently Confederate Julia LeGrand of New Orleans in her wartime diary. On another occasion, she noted parenthetically that "civil war makes strange connections."¹⁶



Above, left to right: Virginia governor John Letcher, who had tried mightily to prevent his state from seceding; Maryland politician Francis P. Blair, known to be a friend of Abraham Lincoln; and Confederate commissioner James M. Mason.



Left: Davis' closest friend in the Confederate cabinet, Judah P. Benjamin, warned northern Republicans that the inevitable consequences of their actions would be a "horrible contest."

Right: Confederate secretary of state R.M.T. Hunter complained that "the occurrence of civil war had interfered with the establishment of Southern economic and diplomatic arrangements."

Two Southern men who believed passionately in the righteousness of the Confederate cause employed the term civil war as they offered advice about coping with Confederate defeat. "Civil war, such as you have just passed through, naturally engenders feelings of animosity, hatred, and revenge," wrote Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest in his farewell address to his troops. "It is our duty to divest ourselves of all such feelings and, so far as it is in our power to do so, to cultivate friendly feelings toward those with whom we have so long contested and heretofore so widely but honestly differed."¹⁷ "Civil wars, like private quarrels, are likely to repeat themselves, where the unsuccessful party has lost the contest only through accident or inadvertence," concluded Richmond editor Edward A. Pollard in his 1866 book *The Lost Cause*.¹⁸

In contrast to the common use of civil war, the term War between the States was virtually unknown during the war years. The first use of it that I have

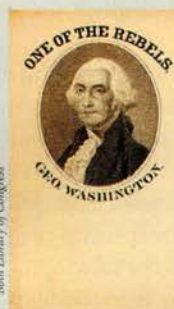
found appears in the *Official Records* and dates from the last months of the conflict. Maryland politician Francis P. Blair traveled to Richmond in February 1865 to meet with Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Known to be a friend of Abraham Lincoln, Blair traveled secretly and unofficially. His mission helped set up the Hampton Roads peace conference a month later. Blair approved a memorandum prepared by his Southern hosts summarizing the substance of the January 12 conversation: "He [Blair] stated, in explanation of his position, that he, being a man of Southern blood, felt very desirous to see the war between the states terminated, and hoped by an interview with me [Jefferson Davis] to be able to effect something to that end."¹⁹ It seems likely that the term was already in the air and that the writer of the memorandum borrowed it from a printed source such as a contemporary newspaper, but I have not searched systematically for the source(s) of origin.

Several high-profile former Confederates referred to the con-

Left: Two contemporary envelopes.

"One of the Rebels—George Washington," is an example of how Southerners proudly referred to themselves as "Rebels" during the war.

"The War for the Union," one of the countless different names given to the war by contemporaries.



Left: Raphael Semmes, who after the war helped popularize the term "War between the States." Right: Alexander H. Stephens wrote "War Between the States" in memoirs, but did not clarify the origin of the term or why he chose it.

flict as the War Between the States in memoirs written shortly after 1865. Most influential was Vice President Alexander H. Stephens' *A Constitutional View of the Late War Between the States* (1868). Stephens did not clarify the origin of the term or why he chose it. His only elaboration was to explain in his introduction that he sought "to present a Constitutional view of the late War between the States of 'the Union,' known as the 'United States of America.'"²⁰ Since he was privy to the discussions between Francis Blair and Jefferson Davis in January 1865, it is possible that Stephens had something to do with using "war between the states" in the memorandum of the discussion.

Also in 1868 Raphael Semmes published his *Memoirs of Service Afloat during the War between the States*. Semmes had used civil war in February 1861. General Joseph E. Johnston also entitled his 1874 memoir *Narrative of Military Operations, Directed, During the Late War between the States*.²¹

Usage in memoirs, as in published and unpublished wartime documents, revealed that Southerners did not immediately or unanimously crown War between the States as the orthodox Southern name for the war. From his home in exile in England, Commander James D. Bulloch, CSN, referred repeatedly to "the Civil War" in his 1884 *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*. Even after the campaign to enshrine War between the States was underway in earnest, General John B. Gordon entitled his 1903 memoir, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*.²²

The event that mobilized former Confederates to choose and wage a campaign for an official Southern name was the publication beginning in 1880 of *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. While Southerners proudly referred to themselves as "Johnny Rebs" and "Rebels" during the war—even flaunting that identity on patriotic envelopes and other publications—they considered it a slur when applied to them by victorious Northerners. Instead of suggesting the intended identification with their forefathers of 1776, the North's use of "rebellion" implied that the war had been a rejection of *legitimate* authority—an interpretation that Southerners rejected.²³

The use of "War of the Rebellion" as the formal title for the *Official Records*

vindicated the warning that the victors were writing the history and would condemn the Confederate cause in the very name of the war. Increasingly, Southerners insisted on a name for the war that recognized the justice of their cause.

The United Confederate Veterans, a federation of local veterans' organizations founded in 1889-1890, took action first. In 1898 the UCV adopted a resolution:

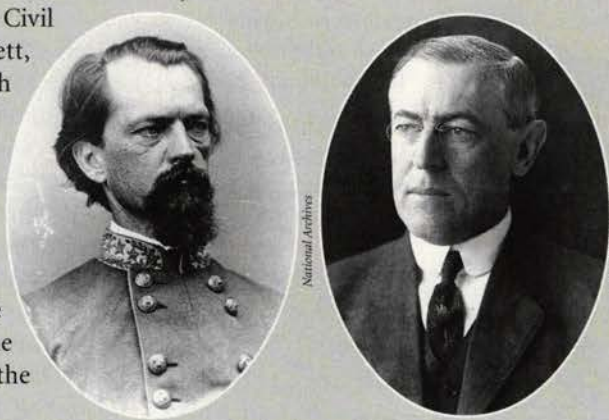
That the expression "war of the Rebellion," which is frequently indulged by the papers and publishers of the South in alluding to the war between the States, is condemned by this organization, as we deem such expressions a reflection on the patriotism of the Southern people and the cause for which they so heroically fought for four years, and we respectfully request that all such publishers in alluding to the war designate it as the civil war between the States.²⁴

Ironical and not a little humorous to modern students of the war, the UCV's official suggestion of "civil war between the States" as the official name of the war was a diplomatic merger of rival names. In response to a resolution that the UCV should approve the name Civil War, William L. DeRossett, commander of the North Carolina Division, objected, but UCV commander-in-chief John B. Gordon did not recognize him. At the UCV's meeting two years later, DeRossett convinced the organization to adopt the name "the war between the states."²⁵

This was also clear in the beginning of the campaign that eventually succeeded in making War between the States Southern orthodoxy. Leading this campaign was the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization founded in 1894 for the purposes of honoring Confederate veterans and vindicating the cause for which they fought by erecting monuments and sponsoring educational and historical work. Consisting of local chapters federated in state divisions, the UDC grew quickly, and by 1900 boasted 412 chapters in twenty states with 17,000 members.

The woman who prompted the UDC to make the name of the war part of its work to set straight the historical record was Miss Kate Mason Rowland. A descendant of the prominent Mason family of Virginia, Rowland was exiled from her northern Virginia home during the war and worked as a matron in several Virginia hospitals. From one on the outskirts of Richmond in April 1865, she watched the evacuation fires consume the Confederate capital and observed in her journal: "This has all been done by our own people.... Better lay the whole city in ashes than give the enemy any munition of war—one drop of 'aid and comfort.'"²⁶ By the 1890s the proudly "unreconstructed" Rowland was living in Baltimore, Maryland, where she collected information about the Confederacy and wrote letters correcting alleged errors and slanders.

In the mid-1890s, for example, she wrote to a woman in Washington D.C. who published an article referring to the "War of the Rebellion." The woman apologized for her "stupid error" and explained that she had asked her editors about War of the Rebellion and suggested changing it to Civil War, but her editors assured her that Southerners did not object to War of the Rebellion.²⁷



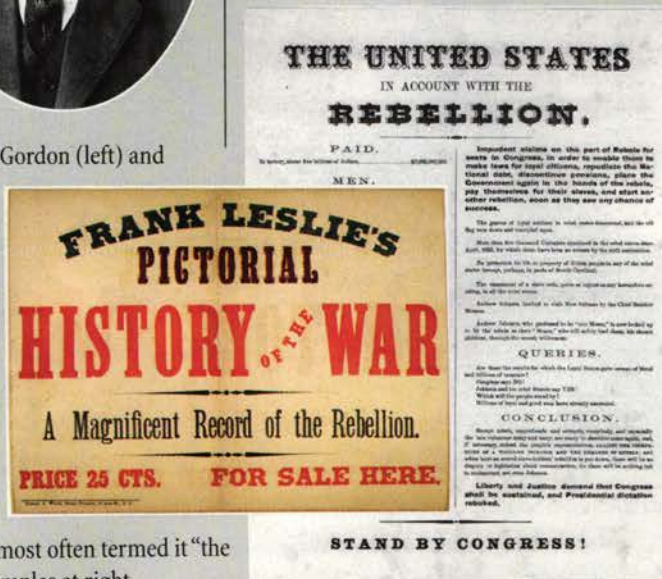
Above: General John B. Gordon (left) and President Woodrow Wilson.

Georgia historian E. Merton Coulter noted that the participants in the conflict evidenced little interest in bestowing an official name upon what they usually called "the war," although Northerners most often termed it "the rebellion," as in the examples at right.

At its general convention in Richmond in November 1899, the UDC approved resolutions that explicitly took up Kate Mason Rowland's campaign and put the UDC in the forefront of the movement to make "war between the States" the official name of the war. The resolutions noted that the Virginia Division UDC, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the United Confederate Veterans had adopted resolutions advocating "war between the States" (conveniently neglecting to mention the UCV's impure use of civil war) and resolved that the National Division UDC "solemnly record their determination to use every influence, as a body and individually, to expel from the literature of the country and from the daily press the phrase, 'war of the rebellion,' and to have substituted for it the phrase, 'war between the States'" and to use influence with the Federal government to banish the name "war of the rebellion" from all government publications.²⁸ In 1911 the UDC created a War Between the States Committee to better accomplish these goals.

Neither the 1899 resolutions nor the explanation of why "rebellion" was an incorrect characterization of the war mentioned "civil war." In subsequent years, however, the UDC took aim at civil war—in large part because it, not War of the Rebellion, emerged as the most common name for the war. By 1916 the chair of the UDC committee reported encouragingly that some newspapers were dropping "the obnoxious words 'civil war.'"²⁹

The civil war habit was a tough one to break, especially for Confederate vet-



erans. *Confederate Veteran* magazine, the official organ of the UCV, stuck to the name "civil war between the states" that the veterans had approved in 1898. Only with the death of editor Sumner Cunningham in 1913, and his succession by UDC leader Edith D. Pope, did the *Veteran* begin using War between the States.³⁰ In response to reports that many veterans desired to use civil war, the UDC committee chair, Flora McDonald (Mrs. L.E.) Williams, in 1917 articulated her polite and rather patronizing disagreement:

Now I fully realize that the Confederate Veteran is a privileged character, with this organization at least, but many of them are just accepting things that come to them. They see in much of the present-day literature the words "Civil War" and don't pause to consider that calling it "Civil War" is a complete surrender of the basic principle upon which the war was waged, the right of self-government, which Mr. [Woodrow] Wilson declared was the dominant note in this present world war. Sad as it seems to admit, there is a degree of either indifference or ignorance on some subjects, among those dear old men that is astonishing.

However "careless" the veterans had grown in their "old age," she concluded, the UDC must adhere to one of its main missions "to collect and preserve the truth of all that pertains to that period of our history." She approvingly pointed out that at the UCV's founding convention in 1890, Commander-in-Chief John B. Gordon (presumably not yet afflicted with the dotage that made him suggest "civil war between the states" eight years later or use Civil War in his own memoir) used the term War Between the States.³¹

Mrs. Williams obviously took her work very seriously, and she paid a price for it. "I am afraid I have alienated some of my best friends by my persistence in correcting their conversation, when they use any of the erroneous terms," she wrote candidly in 1918. "As long as I live, however, I shall do all in my power to have substituted for 'Civil War,' 'Rebellion,' and 'War of Secession' the proper term, 'War Between the States'...." Shortly afterward, she resigned the committee chairmanship, concluding that "we were wasting our efforts in the pursuit of something which then seemed so elusive and hopeless" because Americans were preoccupied with World War I. She chastised her colleagues in the UDC for their careless use of unapproved terms such as "War of Secession."³²

Mrs. Williams' successors similarly labored hard and eventually grew frustrated. Tempe Whitehead Holt reported that she had sent 3,569 letters in 1925, mostly to newspaper editors and history teachers. Why go to all the trouble to correct misnomers used by nine-tenths of the people, Southerners included? asked Lora Gaines Goolsby in 1926. The reason, she reminded her colleagues, was that "the United Daughters of the Confederacy are seeking the education of the younger generation rather than the reformation of the old."³³

The primary purpose for creating the committee in 1911 was to obtain official approval of the name War between the States from the United States Congress. Perhaps coincidentally, earlier in the year that the committee was born, a Georgia congressman had succeeded in revising a bill to substitute Civil War for "the rebellion."³⁴ Determined not to be satisfied with either of those names, the UDC fought to obtain the Congressional imprimatur for "War between the States."

At the UDC's behest, Congressman Charles G. Edwards of Georgia in February 1913 introduced a resolution "officially naming the War Between the States." It stated:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the war sometimes referred to as the "Rebellion" and the "Civil War" be, and the same is hereby, officially and legally designated, named, and known as the "War Between the States."

Referred to a committee, the resolution never made it to the House floor—during that session or during any of the subsequent sessions in which it was introduced by Congressman Edwards or Congressman Ollie James of Kentucky. Committee chairs at various times wrote to Presidents William Howard Taft and Herbert Hoover and received replies stating that Civil War was adequate and would be "hard to eliminate"; Hoover conceded that he saw "no reason" why the UDC's alternative could not be used.³⁵

Despite the complete failure of the UDC's bill, a modern legend has emerged that the U.S. Congress did in fact designate War between the States the official name of the conflict. For example, a few years ago a contributor to the internet mail list "Southern Heritage News &



Above: Miss Kate Mason Rowland, a descendant of the prominent Mason family of Virginia. Photography by Katherine Wetzel.



Right: Presidents William Howard Taft (above) and Herbert Hoover.

Views" insisted: "Oh, by the way, the US Congress declared in 1928 that the official name of the 1861-1865 conflict is the 'War Between the States.'"³⁶ The UDC's official history clarifies what Congress actually passed in 1928 and what it signified:

The nearest to success was reached in 1928 in a joint resolution, introduced by Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, regarding a claim of the State of Nevada against the United States, the term "War Between the States" being used to designate the time the claim originated. This resolution passed both houses. This action did not, of course, make the term official, but occasionally before and since 1928 reports on bills in one or the other of the Houses of Congress have contained the term "War Between the States."³⁷

So incidental was the reference to "War Between the States," in fact, that Senator Pittman referred to the Civil War when he explained the expenses that the Nevada Territory had incurred in keeping open the Overland Trail during the war. At least one other senator also mentioned "civil war." The bill was all about the money claim, not about the name of the war.³⁸

However limited the success in Congress and however frustrating the committee chairs found their work, the passage of time seemed to reveal the Daughters' success. Writing in *The United Daughters of the Confederacy Magazine* in 1951, Dr. S. Walter Martin described the stages of the UDC's labors with Congress and textbook publishers. "Next, the U.D.C. indoctrinated the teachers and they in turn indoctrinated the students," Martin wrote approvingly. "This movement of educating the South to the term 'War Between the States' was a task within itself. As a result of it, however, most southerners speak of the war fought in America between 1861 and 1865 as the 'War Between the States' and we can say that it is due largely to the efforts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy."³⁹

Depending on one's expectations and on sources consulted, the extent of "indoctrination" that occurred was either impressive or surprisingly insignificant. Indoctrination, especially through textbooks and the southern newspapers, elevated War between the States to at least

quasi-official status in the mid-twentieth-century South. Generations of Southern Americans grew up learning that it was the proper name for the war. But even within those generations was wide variation. Not all school texts or major newspapers in the mid-twentieth-century South shunned Civil War. Many older and middle-aged Southerners today claim that they knew no name other than War between the States, while many others of the same age were familiar with it, but grew up in homes and attended schools that used "Civil War."

Usage during the 1960s Civil War centennial era revealed that governments and newspapers were similarly divided. Several Deep South states employed the name for their observations: the Mississippi Commission on the War Between the States and the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission Commemorating the War Between the States. South Carolina's commission and the federation of southern state commissions adopted the name "Confederate War" instead.⁴⁰ Major metropolitan newspapers, including the primary dailies in the former capital of the Confederacy, used Civil War interchangeably with War between the States.

Although it was not universal within the South, War between the States achieved the status among non-Southerners as the unofficial Southern name for the war, and non-Southerners often deferred to it as a gesture

of regional courtesy—sometimes with a wink and a smile. In their coverage of the Confederate flag fad that swept the nation in the early 1950s, northern publications such as *Business Week* and *Life* magazine used War Between the States instead of Civil War.⁴¹ As recently as 1994 the U.S. Post Office issued a commemorative postage stamp set featuring diverse people, northern and southern, men and women, white and black, and entitled the set "The Civil War" / "The War Between the States." The Post Office's usage suggested deference to Southern sensibilities in the name of inclusiveness.⁴²

But, for many others, War between the States reveals something more than habit or inclusiveness. It is a statement of principle. The most forceful, effective, and enduring spokesman for that principle was Miss Mildred Lewis Rutherford of Athens, Georgia, the UDC's historian-general (1911-1916) and the most prolific UDC speaker and writer for a quarter-century.

Rutherford advised Southerners about approving school textbooks and reference books that presented the Confederate viewpoint fairly and favorably. "Reject a text-book that does not give the principles for which the South fought in 1861, and does not clearly outline the interferences with the rights guaranteed



Library of Congress

Above: Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, who introduced the 1928 Senate bill that used the term "War between the States."

Right: Mildred Lewis Rutherford, the UDC's historian-general from 1911 to 1916. Photography by Katherine Wetzel.



The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia

to the South by the Constitution and which caused secession. Reject a book that calls the Confederate soldier a traitor or rebel, and the war a rebellion.”⁴³

More explicitly, she counseled Southerners on the name of the war. “Ours was not a Civil War, so let us correct that wrong first.”

The United States was a Republic of Sovereign States. We were not a Nation until after the surrender, and even now the States have not surrendered their rights. A civil war must be in one State between two parties of that State. If we acknowledge that ours was a CIVIL WAR, we acknowledge we were a Nation, or one State in 1861 and not a Republic of Sovereign States, and therefore had no right to secede. That is what the North would like us to acknowledge.

“It was,” she explained (after ruling out “War of the Rebellion,” “War of Secession,” and “War of Sections”) “the WAR BETWEEN THE STATES, for the non-seceding States of the United States made war upon the seceding States of the United States to force them back into the Union. Please call it so, and teach it so.”⁴⁴

Generations of UDC and Sons of Confederate Veterans members have heeded her instructions. A UDC leader

in Ashland, Virginia, stated more succinctly the point that Mildred Rutherford elaborated: “Every time it [Civil War] is used the principle of States’ Rights is surrendered—‘that principle for which the South contended and justified herself in her struggle for that principle.’” An essay presented to a UDC chapter in Staunton, Virginia, insisted that the common allusion to the war as the Civil War was “laughable.” “A civil war is a war between sections or parties of the same nation,” reasoned the author, Archer D. Collins. The United States and Confederate States “were just as distinctly two separate nations as England and Germany are two separate nations.” Writing in the early years of World War I, he added that “one may as well speak of that titanic struggle now going on in Europe as a civil war.”⁴⁵

Rutherford’s explanation of War between the States underscores its convoluted logical and grammatical foundations and the inconsistencies between the name and the constitutional principles that it supposedly vindicates. Since Southern constitutional theory insisted that each state was sovereign, and Rutherford herself argued that the United States was *not* “one State” in 1861, it is curious that she and other Confederate loyalists elevated the federations of states to “States” between which a war was fought. Rutherford and her compatriots use the word “State” ambiguously: to describe both the sovereign entities (South Carolina, Georgia, etc.) within the federated republic and the republic itself. “War between the Republics” would have been a more logical name.

Left: Several Southern states employed both the official term Civil War and the regional standard War Between the States in their centennial observations.

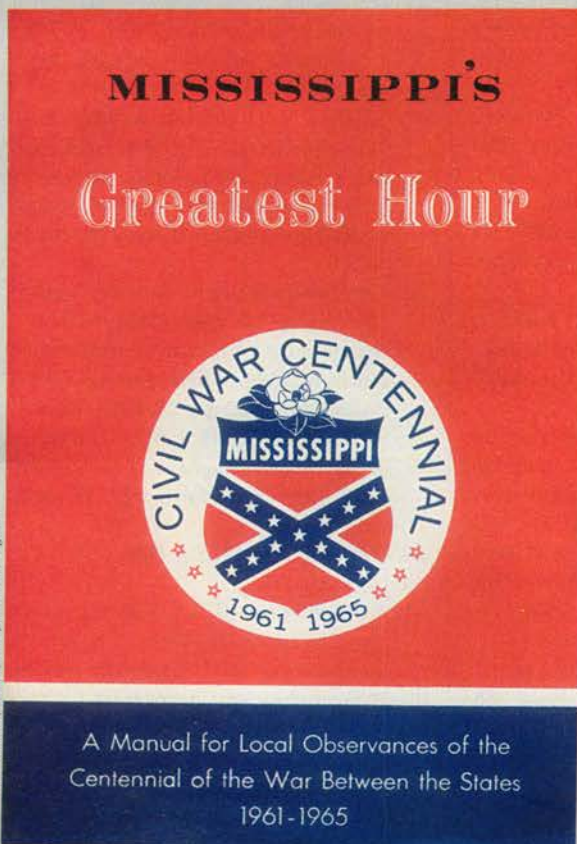
Responding to the inevitable tendency of the victors to write the history, Kate Mason Rowland, Mildred Rutherford, and their followers determined that the losers’ version would have the upper hand—at least among Southerners. Their argument insisted that the name of the war must reflect

the Confederate interpretation of the issue that the war was to decide: the Southern states had a constitutional right to secede.

According to their argument, the name of the war must grant to the Confederacy after the fact the legitimacy that it never enjoyed in reality. Aside from a very indirect recognition by the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, no foreign state ever formally recognized the Confederate States of America.⁴⁶ Although it maintained its *de facto* existence for four years, the Confederacy never enjoyed *de jure* recognition. In the eyes of the world, the Confederacy was not a separate state and, therefore, its struggle to gain independence was a civil war, not a foreign war. Furthermore, the strong Unionist populations in the mountainous regions of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and northern Alabama, and the estimated 200,000 men (white and black) from the eleven seceded states who fought in Federal armies, suggest that the Confederacy failed to adequately command the allegiance of its own people.⁴⁷ Finally, the Confederacy never controlled all of the territory it claimed; the federal government never relinquished its footholds at Fort Pickens and Fort Monroe and soon occupied large areas of the border and coastal South. The Confederacy performed a minor miracle to create a functioning government and formidable army in a matter of months, but those accomplishments did not win it a formal place among the nations of the world.

Historian and Richmond newspaper editor Douglas Southall Freeman, who revered the Confederacy and its heroes, observed that to argue between the use of Civil War and War between the States was to “split hairs.” He tended to use the latter out of custom, but believed that “War for Southern Independence” was most accurate.⁴⁸ Although he had his own opinions on the best name of the war, Freeman chose not to make the name a crusade or a cause.

There was and is a lot in a name. The names of wars and other significant historical events convey perspective and often judgments on those events. As with everything else relating to the American War of 1861-1865, the name of the war is complicated by the fact that all the combatants were Americans and their descendants are full participants in the life of the reunited country. Although former



Confederates and their descendants worried about their cause being maligned by a history written by the victors, they have not been forced to denounce or renounce their cause, their heroes, their symbols, or their names for the war. The prevalence of War between the States in the South for much of the twentieth century testifies to this tolerance.

Students of the war should see War between the States for what it is: a post-war name consciously propagated as an alternative to War of the Rebellion. Although it is not necessarily a loaded term, partisans promoted it—and still promote it—for the ideologically loaded purpose of defending the Southern interpretation of the war's origin and nature. Confederate soldiers, generals, and leaders did not use the term during the war itself and they had to be reeducated to use it in place of other names, notably civil war.

Students of the war should study and discuss the issues that led to the conflict. The nature of the Union in 1861 and the right of secession warrant study as much as the debate over slavery that led Southern statesmen to exercise what they believed to be the right of secession.⁴⁹

The proper name of the war offers a stimulating starting point for these discussions, just as other historians debate the use of "massacre" versus "uprising" to describe Indian (or Native American) conflicts or whether American Negroes should be called blacks, Afro-Americans, or African Americans. Thoughtful point-counterpoint articles such as those often published in the pages of *North & South* can critically assess the facts and assumptions underlying "civil war," "War between the States," Gary Gallagher's "Confederate War," the increasingly popular "War for Southern Independence," and Merton Coulter's provocative "War Against Southern Independence."

But students of the war also need a name that they can use not to provoke discussion, but merely to designate the subject of their study—a name that is a common currency. That common currency is Civil War. It was a name that Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Henry Halleck, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and William T. Sherman used. If it were good enough for them, it should be good enough for us. ■

JOHN M. COSKI is Historian and Director of Library & Research at The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia. He is the author of *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Belknap Press, 2005).

1. Ron Jones, letter in *North & South*, vol. 4, no. 4 (April 2001): 5.
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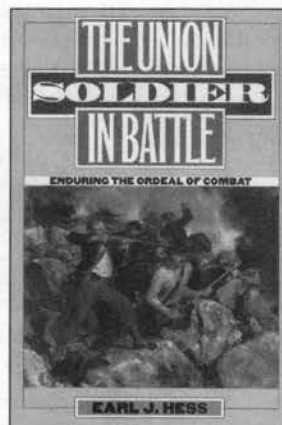
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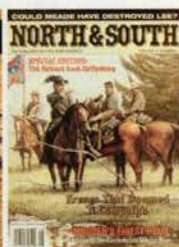
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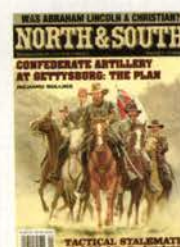
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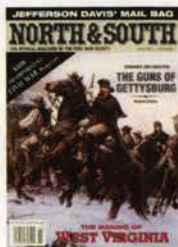
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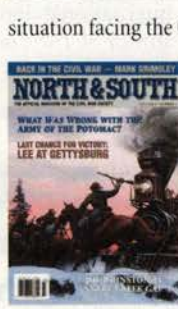
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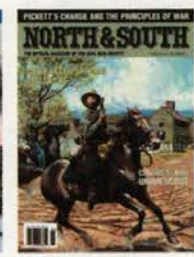
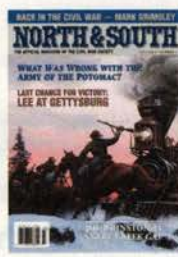
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JAMES A. DAVIS

Harmonious Discord

Contrary Views of Band and Field Music During the Civil War

"AS WE MARCHED OUT OF TOWN THE BRASS BANDS WERE PLAYING, the drums beating, colors flying, and the fair ladies waving their handkerchiefs and cheering us on to 'victory or death.' Oh! how nice to be a soldier!"¹ These stirring words, said by Private John Casler of the renowned Stonewall Brigade as he and his comrades left New Creek, Virginia, in

June 1861, are typical of the martial image so common to the American Civil War. Prominent in many such descriptions are the army musicians, including buglers and drummer boys, drum corps and regimental bands. Northern and Southern participants repeatedly described the constant and valuable contributions that these musicians made

during the war, from the mundane sounding of the camp hours to the boosting of morale for soldiers on a march. Music was a vital presence across the troubled young nation and left an indelible imprint on those who were swept up in the conflict.

Given its ubiquitous status it is easy to assume that music was always viewed



favorably, and that musicians and their performances occupied a bipartisan station above the sullied battlefields. In fact, one of the most popular stories drawn from contemporary accounts depicts soldiers wearing the blue and the gray gathering across the lines to listen to a spontaneous concert by a band. Not everyone was thrilled with the musicians, however—there were plenty of hecklers scattered throughout the ranks to keep the musicians honest. The letters, diaries, and memoirs of Civil War soldiers and civilians reveal that a number of factors could negatively impact the reception of Civil War music and musicians. From personality conflicts to inconsistent quality, a veritable musical civil war swirled around these soldier-performers.

* * *

THE FIRST THING THAT GREETED SOLDIERS EVERY MORNING

was the dreaded sound of the field musicians blaring reveille. This distinctive sound formed the basis for innumerable descriptions of camp life. Noted one Union soldier: "From some commanding elevation the clear-toned bugle sounds out the *reveillé*, and another and another responds, until the startled echoes double and treble the clarion calls. Intermingled with this comes the beating of drums, often rattling and jarring on unwilling ears."² Is it any surprise that those responsible for these annoying wake-up calls were viewed with disgust by their comrades? Cries of "Put the bugler in the guard-

house!"—and probably worse—were hurled at the musicians by grumpy soldiers.³ Confederate soldiers went so far as to commemorate their buglers with the "Upidee" song, whose lyrics lampoon the bugler's untimely and undesired calls. Yet when reminiscing in later decades many veterans remarked that the sound of a bugle stirred their memories in a unique and powerful way. Perhaps the passing of time softened the memory of these early morning notes, as some veterans fondly recalled the impressions that the calls of a bugle brought to them. In any case the sound of the camp calls was inextricably bound up with the emotional turmoil these men experienced. As a homesick Edwin Hall of the 10th Vermont Infantry mused, "But I hope there are better

**Band of the 8th New York State Militia,
Arlington, Virginia, June 1861.**

Library of Congress



times coming when I will be free to go and come without the sound of the bugle."⁴

The peculiar rank and status of field musicians helped to distinguish them from the men in the ranks as much as the somewhat onerous duties they performed. Field musicians were enlisted men, equivalent to privates, but they often functioned outside of the normal regimental or company duties and hence were not seen as "real" soldiers. Though called upon to perform specific duties at specific times, musicians often had "free" time while other soldiers were occupied, and this could lead to resentment. While most field musicians would fill the day with activities common to all soldiers (such as writing letters), the youngest members of a regiment, the infamous drummer boys, no doubt found it a little more challenging to pass the time. The portrait handed down to us of the gallant youth proudly bearing his drum alongside his older comrades in the face of battle is stirring, but there are likewise reports of adolescent drummers behaving in ways more representative of their age—no longer cute mascots to the regiment but "youthful but insubordinate fellows."⁵ Musicians of all ages were apparently adept at gambling and inventive in their search for entertainment.⁶

A common view of musicians as slackers arose at the beginning of the war due to an abundance of unmusical performers. Quite a few men enlisted as musicians at the outbreak of war, imagining this to be the safest and least demanding assignment, yet one still enabling them to share in the grand adventure. These individuals were quickly acquainted with reality: field musicians worked quite hard and certainly kept some of the worst hours. Those without talent could not keep up the charade for long, and were soon placed into the ranks alongside other privates or discharged from the army. Still, the damage was done, and many soldiers maintained an impression of army musicians as shirkers for the rest of the war.

Though camp calls functioned primarily as organizational tools and not as works of art, many of the army's budding critics evaluated field musicians on the aesthetic qualities of their performances. Some of these critics were negative in their appraisals, such as William Lyle of



Above: Drummer boys off duty, playing cards in camp, during the winter of 1862. Right: Reveille in a Confederate camp.

the 11th Ohio Infantry, who described the sound of a breaking camp as "the sharp rattle of drums and the shrill sounds of the fife, the confused clangor of countless bugles...."⁷ Others, like the 10th Vermont Infantry's Oscar Waite, were remarkably creative in their descriptions: "After a hurried breakfast ... came the 'Pack up' call, to which the bugler added a perfect imitation of a long drawn out triumphant crow of a rooster."⁸ Somewhat surprising are the number of positive descriptions of field music. Colonel Charles Wainwright of New York described "A fine-looking body of men, with uncommonly good field music, French drums and trumpets: their tattoo tonight was the best I have ever heard."⁹ Union general William T. Sherman was at one point to say, "I was thus listening when, about 4 a.m. the bugler in the rebel camp sounded as pretty a reveille as I ever listened to."¹⁰ And Frederick Wild of the Baltimore Light Artillery was truly poetic in his appreciation:

The solemn, soothing notes of the bugle when sounding taps, especially on a quiet, cold winter evening, when the earth was covered with snow, from the various camps among the hills a mile or two apart, was beautifully impressive. It often seemed to me like Angel music from the skies, singing sweet lullabies to the thousands of weary soldiers dreaming of home, and friends.¹¹



Bandsmen encountered many of the same problems that field musicians did, despite the significantly different roles that they were assigned. At the outset of the war bands were omnipresent, and an amazing number of regiments left home with their local bands proudly leading the way. The vision of a military band or drum corps escorting the troops in parade down a street or in a charge against the enemy was central to the romantic image of nineteenth-century warfare. The bloody brawl at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 not only showed the American people that the war was to be a long and traumatic affair, it also led politicians and commanding generals to acknowledge that bands occupied a much less important position than might first have been imagined. For the



Evening music performed at Major General Alfred Pleasonton's headquarters.



Band before quarters at Camp Stoneman, District of Columbia.

Union this led to General Orders No. 91 in July 1862, delineating the number of musicians allowed in a band as well as limiting the number of bands to one per brigade. Many, like the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry's chaplain Alonzo Quint, saw the beneficent impact the bands had on the troops, and viewed the mustering out of bandmen as a serious error:

Those who advocate this [the discharge of regimental bands] cannot have an idea of their value among soldiers. I do not know anything particular of the science or practice of music ... but I see the effects of a good band, like ours, continually. It scatters the dismal part of camp life; gives new spirit to the men jaded by or on a march; wakes up their enthusiasm. Could you see our men, when, of an evening, our band comes out and plays its sweet stirring music, you would say, if retrenchment must come,

let it be somewhere else.... [L]et the men have their music.¹²

Some, however, were glad to be rid of the bands, including a member of the 2nd Minnesota: "The band has been discharged, right glad we were to be rid of the lazy grumbling loafers."¹³

As was the case with their comrades in the drum corps, band musicians walked a fine line with other troops. They provided a valued service but often did not take on some of the burdens or dangers of the men in the ranks. Wise musicians recognized this and devoted themselves to keeping their fellows readily supplied with good music. Some musicians, however, seemed oblivious to their tenuous status and behaved in ways that only helped to reinforce negative perceptions. A member of the 55th Illinois Infantry gives an apt description of one such band:

Some writer has used the far-fetched expression that at this period the army was clothed with



General William T. Sherman: "I was thus listening when, about 4 a.m. the bugler in the rebel camp sounded as pretty a reveille as I ever listened to."

music. If so, the Fifty-Fifth had its full share of harmonious apparel. In addition to the irrepressible drum corps, a splendid brass band had so far been connected with the regiment. Although the men liked well enough to listen to their music and march to its rhythm, the members of the band had always erected their tent in the field-officers' row, and held themselves somewhat aloof from the common soldiers. As their duties were somewhat of the dress-parade order, they were the victims of many rough jokes. If the term had then been invented, they would have been called military dudes.¹⁴

Many regiments chose to have bands of their own, despite the restrictions handed down from Washington. This meant that instruments and music had to be purchased by the members of the regiment. While some complained of the expense, it was usually seen as a worthwhile investment. Noted Alfred Bellard of the 5th New Jersey Infantry:

Our band were getting along nicely and were handsomely uniformed in blue jackets trimmed with black facings and three rows of brass buttons, shake hat with plume, and brass eagle ornament, epaulettes, and black pants with blue, black and gilt stripe down the seam. They looked very gay,

but the company funds had to sweat in rigging them out. The officers paid an assesment for that purpose and the funds did the rest. On July 4th the 1st brigade consisting of the 1st, 7th, 9th, 23rd, and 24th Regts. of V.R.C. had a review and parade in rear of our quarters and made a handsome display, having with us three bands.¹⁵

Bored musicians were a threat at any time, and on occasion musicians would entertain themselves with impromptu concerts, with mixed results: "The 29th Ohio quartered with us and two or four men, finding they had some brass pieces with them, played some really fine duets. Afterwards they made less pleasant noises. They beat a big bass drum furiously in the middle of the night. They worked the most hideous noises out of a trombone at frequent intervals till daylight broke," noted New Yorker Edward Wightman.¹⁶ Even more problematic were those musicians who mixed their music with alcohol. "We had a fine serenade at headquarters...and whiskey punch flowed freely. General Kearny's favorite air is 'The Mocking Bird,' and the band leaders know that if this tune is well played they will be furnished whiskey 'ad libitum.' So we have this fine piece played over repeatedly, or as long as the musicians can see his instrument. Sometimes the whiskey prevents his so doing, when the band is dismissed without thanks," recalled Robert Sneden of the 40th New York.¹⁷

Perhaps even more embarrassing was the fighting among the musicians themselves. Many soldiers held the view that musicians were temperamental dilettantes, leading one Connecticut captain to compare squabbling army officers to musicians: "My impression is that jealousy is about as common among regular officers as it is in a singing choir or an opera troupe."¹⁸ There were frequent arguments between enlisted musicians as to who was the better performer and hence deserved the higher rank. At the outset of war many small town bandleaders had enlisted with local regiments, sharing with the general populace the mistaken belief that they were in for no more than a grand outing with friends. Few of these bandleaders were suited to the rigors of army life in the field and



Above: The drum corps of the 10th Veteran Reserve Corps at leisure.

Right: Major General Philip Kearny. According to one soldier, Kearny's favorite air was "The Mocking Bird."

were unwilling to take orders concerning their art from officers often younger than they were. A musician from Vermont described one such individual: "We don't like our Drum Major very well & there aint hardly any one in the regt that does, he don't come up to the mark. I heard that Col said he hated him. He (Major) thinks he will get promoted before long, expects a commission. I shoud'nt wonder if the Drum Corps played out before long."¹⁹ As the war evolved such unsuitable behavior disappeared, as the armies were forced to trim themselves into capable fighting machines.

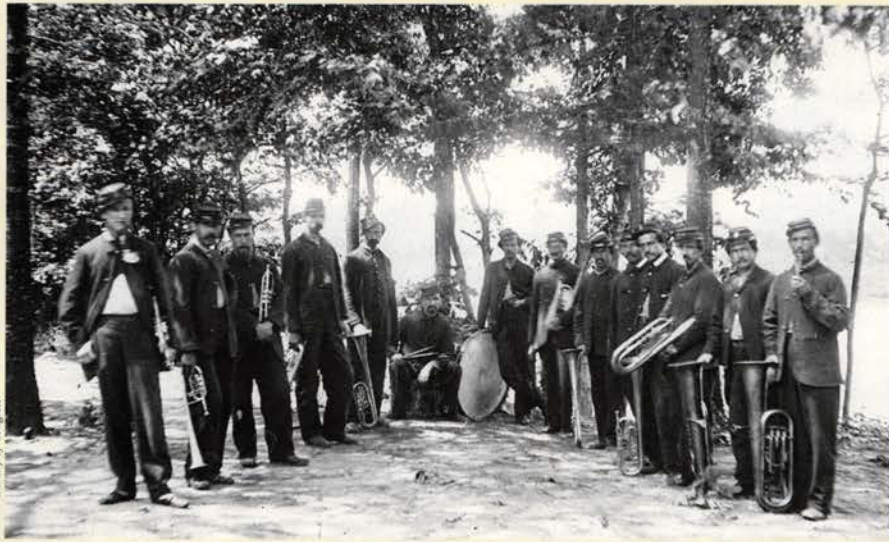
Needless to say, the quality of the bands varied as greatly as the troops that made up the ranks of each army. Some bands—such as Patrick Gilmore's 24th Massachusetts Infantry band—were extremely talented, had balanced instrumentation, and played advanced pieces. Gilmore did not come cheap, and there were few regiments that could afford such a specialized ensemble. Most regiments paid for instruments and music through soldier subscriptions and officer donations, filling their bands with musicians drawn from the regiment. Underprivileged regiments were forced to concoct bands from whatever instruments were available and could never hope to obtain the standard of performance found in the professional groups. Still, most of the soldiers were extremely fond of musicians,



Battles and Leaders of the Civil War

regardless of their talent or instrumentation. As Thomas Key of Arkansas put it: "At night the band of General Polk's brigade surprised me with a serenade. Composed of one cornet, one bass horn, two violins, two flutes, and one guitar, its music was beautiful and sweet, and its stirring strains moved my heart and aroused sacred and dear memories."²⁰ But other bands did not receive such a sympathetic reception. "Regimental bands were serenading at each general's headquarters after dark," noted Robert Sneden. "That which serenaded General Kearny must have been the worst one in the army. It was a regular 'sheet iron band.' I did not learn of which regiment. General Kearny gave this band a gallon of whiskey 'to go away!' It was [a] 'regular circus.'"²¹

Though military ensembles were usually formed around experienced musicians, they still needed to learn their in-



Above: Band of the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery at Fort Darling on the James River.

Left: Brigadier General Lucius E. Polk. Polk's brigade band was composed of one cornet, one bass horn, two violins, two flutes, and one guitar.



much as their fellows in the ranks, and there were few if any bands that saw the end of the war without having lost members to sickness, injury, capture, or death. Likewise any environment harsh enough to have mortal consequences for band members could also wreak havoc on their instruments, and the combination could prove to be too much for the music. So recalled Horace Porter, a member of Ulysses S. Grant's staff:

Sheridan always made an effective use of his bands. They were usually mounted on gray horses, and instead of being relegated to the usual duty of carrying off the wounded and assisting the surgeons, they were brought out to the front and made to play the liveliest airs in their repertory, which produced excellent results in buoying up the spirits of the men. After having several of their instruments pierced by bullets, however, and the drums crushed by shells, as often happened, it must be admitted that the music, viewed purely in the light of an artistic performance, was open to adverse criticism.²⁴

Ardent supporters of the bands, such as the Richmond Howitzers' Carlton McCarthy, would not be put off by a war-deprived ensemble: "Brass bands, at first

quite numerous and good, became very rare and their music very poor in the latter years of the war. It was a fine thing to see the fellows trying to keep the music going as they waded through the mud. But poor as the music was, it helped the footsore and weary to make another mile, and encouraged a cheer and a brisker step from the lagging and tired column."²⁵

There were many soldiers grateful for the strains generated by the bands, even when such sounds were perhaps not as melodious as one would like. Soldiers were generally supportive of their bands despite their sound, and offered encouraging, though painfully honest, appraisals: "[W]ent over to the Band in the evening to hear some vocal and instrumental music," noted James Kirkpatrick of the 16th Mississippi Infantry. "Our band is a great institution. It always keeps its numbers undiminished, and labors with the greatest assiduity at 'tooting'. Their music, however, is never the sweetest nor most harmonious."²⁶ At times the encouragement was more guarded: "I must say a word about our band....," wrote the 10th Vermont's Tabor Parcher. "[I]t consists of 14 members out of the regt they play first rait for the time that they have been a practising."²⁷ A soldier from the same regiment concurred: "Our band has got so that it plays some[.] they have been out on dress parade twice they play very well for new beginners."²⁸

Disgruntled soldiers could be remarkably creative in their deprecations of regimental bands that lacked talent. One analogy that appears a number of times in soldiers' writings compares the sound of military bands to those of a garrulous army mule. Colonel Sir Arthur Fremantle, the unofficial British observer of the Confederacy, disdainfully used the phrase "braying discordantly" to capture the sound of a Confederate band.²⁹ Another would-be comic from the 55th Illinois Infantry attempted to describe the sonorous atmosphere surrounding a pen of mules at feeding time: "The soul-searching strains of disapproval arising from the corral about these times did much to console the men for the recent loss of the brass band. For the purpose of destroying sleep and jarring upon the nerves of a sick man they almost equaled the drum corps...."³⁰ A Minnesota soldier put forth an even closer relationship between the mules and the musicians:

struments and practice new music. This could be a painful process; a captain in the 16th Maine described being afflicted by "a constant succession of toots from fifteen beginners on wind instruments."²² Preparing music was not the only challenge facing army musicians. Those who enlisted in the military were often surprised at how much they needed to learn of the army manual beyond their musical responsibilities. Just as the soldiers were learning to handle their arms and move in formation, so too were the bands practicing their drills. This could lead to comical results. Recalled William Herrick of the 3rd Vermont Infantry, "The bands of each brigade were combined. That of the first brigade got through first rate but ours blundered terribly, pretty uneasy in our nervousness and excitement."²³

Even the best ensembles found it impossible to maintain a high standard of performance as the war evolved. Musicians suffered from the ravages of war as

Misfortunes never come singly and on the next day a wagon load...of brass instruments, varying in size from a dinner horn to a cart wheel arrived for our band and peace fled, for the next two weeks the braying of the horns from one side...would be answered by the braying of the mules from the other.... The poor mules no doubt thought another wagon train was parked over there. Whether the mules ever learned of their mistake or the band boys...that it was not a portion of their crowd answering...

I cannot say.³¹

While regimental musicians bore the brunt of such humorous invectives, amateur performers were not above teasing themselves, as when one New Jersey soldier described visiting a local home: "They have a very fine piano in it, and as Captain Alstrom is Provost Martial now, and stationed with us, it comes very opportune and we make the country around hideous with our howls."³²

Obviously a soldier's personal tastes would impact his view of a band's performance. Such was certainly the case with the man who was eventually placed in charge of all the Union forces, Ulysses S. Grant. While encamped around Petersburg, Horace Porter participated in a humorous scenario with a nearby garrison commander:

[The commander] arranged to send the band over to the headquarters camp to play for him [Grant] while he was dining. The garrison commander was in blissful ignorance of the fact that to the general the appreciation of music was a lacking sense and the musician's score a sealed book. About the third evening after the band had begun its performances, the general, while sitting at the mess-table, remarked: "I've noticed that that band always begins its *noise* just about the time I am sitting down to dinner and want to talk." I offered to go and make an effort to suppress it, and see whether it would obey an order to "cease firing," and my services were promptly accepted. The men were gorgeously uniformed, and the band seemed to



Above: Grant's cavalry escort at City Point, Virginia, in March 1865. Note buglers at left.

Right: General Ulysses S. Grant: "I've noticed that that band always begins its *noise* just about the time I am sitting down to dinner and want to talk."

embrace every sort of brass instrument ever invented, from a diminutive cornet-à-pistons to a gigantic double-bass horn. The performer who played the latter instrument was encased within its ample twists, and looked like a man standing inside the coils of a whiskey-still. The broad-belted band-master was puffing with all the vigor of a quack-medicine advertisement, his eyes were riveted upon the music, and it was not an easy task to attract his attention. Like a sperm-whale, he had come up to blow, and was not going to be put down till he had finished; but finally he was made to understand that, like the hand-organ man, he was desired to move on. With a look of disinheritor on his countenance, he at last marched off his band to its camp. On my return the general said: "I fear that band-master's feelings have been hurt, but I didn't want him to be wasting his time upon a person who has no ear for music."³³

Certainly contrary views of band music depended on the situation in which the music was performed. Bands that joined the celebration after a victory



might please the victors immensely, but would rarely elicit favorable comments from the losing side. Soldiers from the same side could also have different reactions to a band, depending on whether they felt the music was more help or hindrance. As noted earlier, General Phil Sheridan, commander of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac, was well known for using his bands as motivation for his troops, often having his bands perform in dangerous combat situations. This was the case at the Battle of Saylor's Creek (April 6, 1865), where the VI Corps fell on elements of Lee's retreating army. One Union soldier found the performance by the musicians to be uplifting: "The bands were brought to the front; and as we were now lying across the path of the rebels, the air was made musical with Hail Columbia and kindred National airs. It was a saucy act, but it was inspiring to the Union troops."³⁴ A



The drum corps of the 61st New York Infantry.



Horace Porter (left), a member of General Grant's staff, and Major General Phil Sheridan, commander of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac.

very different account can be found from an Ohio officer attempting to organize his troops at the same location: "Sheridan was accompanied by a large mounted brass band that commenced playing *Hail to the Chief*, or some other than unwelcome music. This drew the fire from the battery with increased fury on the whole party.... Being in immediate charge of the forces there, I invited the Generals to get out of the way, but as they did not retire I ordered a charge upon the 'noisy band,' and thus caused the whole party to retire to a place of greater safety."³⁵

Some musicians were to find that their choice of music could trigger a bewildering variety of responses, both positive and negative, depending on the time, location, and audience. There are innumerable accounts of bands proudly marching through towns blowing "Dixie"

or "John Brown's Body" to the satisfaction of the troops but the distress of enemy civilians. A Pennsylvania soldier described such an occurrence during the Overland Campaign in the summer of 1864: "As the army passed through this country of Confederate adherents, the blinds of the windows in the houses were usually closed, and scarcely a person was to be seen. But behind those blinds, scornful and revengeful eyes watched the 'Yanks' as they marched to the music of the Union."³⁶

Economic or social class, education, hometown or native state—these factors and more impacted the reception of music by the soldiers. The hegemonic stratification of art and its audiences through the efforts of certain education reformers, music journalists, private patrons, and public institutions on occasion

carried over to the battlefield. It has been argued that there arose in the nineteenth century a distinction between so-called fine and popular art, and that behaviors and attitudes deemed appropriate to each were introduced and propagated by those from the upper echelons of society.³⁷ Yet while an artistic dichotomy might have been forming for a portion of this country's populace, such a process was in its infancy at best. The diversity of music performed by regimental bands, for example, shows that performers and audiences in the ranks saw little distinction between band arrangements of folk songs, operatic overtures, or works composed specifically for brass band. Likewise the performance of a band was not judged primarily as a higher or lower artistic experience so much as a treasured opportunity to hear rehearsed ensemble music. Also, the privileged status granted to military music and ensembles during wartime guaranteed some aesthetic autonomy, at least for the majority of soldiers who were not experienced in modern European trends. Some of those attuned to the aesthetic revolution, however, took their artistic hierarchy with them on campaign, and a noticeable difference in taste was sometimes evidenced between the well-educated urban officer class and the rural enlisted men.

Wealthy, educated officers were sometimes scornful of the enlisted men's music and frowned upon the efforts of musicians to entertain the troops. The previously mentioned British observer, Colonel Fremantle, was generally unimpressed with the performance of the Confederate bands, and American officers could be equally condescending.³⁸ As a member of the 106th New York Infantry tells:

My men were singing and dancing a "walk around" to-night and making considerable noise the Col. sent down word to have it stoped. I went out and calling them to an attention, informed them of the fact that the Col. was a great lover of good music, but make a distinction—not flattering to himself between "music" and "noise," that he classed the present performance as "noise" and therefore I was under the painful necessity of directing them to cease.³⁹

Another Union soldier, Robert Goldthwaite Carter of the 22nd Massachusetts, could not help but comment on the musical performance by rowdy soldiers following the taking of Fredericksburg in December 1862. Though sensitive to the positive impact the music was having on the troops, his refined tastes colored his description: "All kinds of music sounded upon the air. Cracked fiddles, with unsonorous notes, under the hands of most unskillful performers, flutes, fifes, and untuned pianos, accompanied by most unmelodious voices, added to the uproar.... But there was a warm cheerfulness that had its effect. It smoothed the hard lines of anxiety and suspense from our faces. It thawed the chill from our sorrow-stricken, hardened hearts, and compelled many half-suppressed smile to break forth into ripples of hearty laughter."⁴⁰

Opposing views of music such as this are a valuable way to add definition to our perceptions of how music functioned in the lives of these witnesses; furthermore, it is an incredible means of gauging if and how a dichotomy between "art" music and "popular" music was forming. What the contrary views so far discussed do reveal is that aesthetic judgments or criticisms of music were not entirely dependent on any assumed or proclaimed bifurcation between highbrow and low-brow art. There were plenty of immediate and personal factors that would lead hearers to evaluate music differently without recourse to European concert traditions or any particular religious or educational program.

Given the hardships faced by Civil War musicians it is remarkable that they managed to produce any music at all. No doubt the combination of obstacles significantly detracted from certain aesthetic aspects of their performances. A modern listener might very well be horrified were they to hear some of these bands or drum corps, possibly agreeing with those who were both creative and generous with their taunting. Yet the more first-hand accounts one reads it becomes clear that such criticism was usually directed at individual musicians rather than their music. Profound gratitude is the most common attitude toward the music. The existence of contrary views of Civil War music is a necessary reminder that the quality of musical per-



The 93rd New York Infantry drum corps photographed near Germantown, Virginia.

formance might have been quite poor, and the musicians themselves might have been the butt of numerous jokes, but this was ultimately irrelevant for the vast majority of soldiers. For those on the front lines it was the passion, not the perfection, of the music that was so valuable. This music occupied a truly special place within these soldiers, so much so that a decline in musical refinement in no way lessened the appreciation of the performances.

That music occupied a crucial role in the lives of those caught up in America's most sanguinary conflict is beyond debate. Whether technically assisting the army through the playing of camp calls or supporting the men emotionally through band music, field musicians and bandsmen performed an invaluable service. It is entertaining and enlightening to discover that these musicians had peculiar difficulties of their own and that the music they played sometimes met with mixed results. Perhaps the multifaceted perception of music during the American Civil War is best summed up in the views of its two most famous generals. Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, once proclaimed: "I don't see how we could have an army without music."⁴¹ Across the lines, Ulysses S. Grant had a strikingly different attitude: "Well, with me a musical joke always requires explanation," he said, "I know only two tunes: one is 'Yankee Doodle,' and the other isn't."⁴² □

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SPARTAN BAND: Burnett's 13th Texas Cavalry in the Civil War

By Thomas Reid (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2005. Pp. 220, Hardback, photos, 8 maps, notes, rosters, appendices. \$29.95, ISBN 1-57441-189-6).

In recent years, students of the Civil War's Trans-Mississippi theatre have been treated with several fine Texas unit histories, chief among them Richard Lowe's excellent *Walker's Texas Division, C.S.A.: Greyhounds of the Trans-Mississippi*. This outfit, called the "greyhounds" as a result of the incredible marching distances it covered during the war, fought all over southern Arkansas and western Louisiana from 1862 to 1865 before ending up back in Texas at war's end. The 13th Texas Cavalry, organized by Mexican War veteran John H. Burnett, was one of the greyhound regiments and participated in all of the division's major campaigns.

Spartan Band is a well-researched and engagingly written social and political history of the 13th Texas Cavalry. In his discussion of the unit's organization, author Thomas Reid surveys in detail the demographics of the regiment and confirms Lowe's findings. Following assembly and training, the Texas cavalrymen were sent to Arkansas, where they were promptly dismounted, forcing the men to fight on foot for the rest of the war.

Up until its operations west of the Mississippi during the Vicksburg Campaign, the regiment's service was largely confined to interminable and seemingly pointless marching and countermarching across the theatre. Exhaustion and constant exposure in the wet woods and swamps of Arkansas and Louisiana took a terrible toll on the Texans' health. Over the length of its service, disease killed almost ten times as many men in the 13th as did enemy bullets.

Although one participant commented that Walker's Texans marched more and fought less than any other Confederate division, they did see significant action at the battles of Mansfield, Pleasant Hill, and Jenkins' Ferry during the 1864 Red River Campaign. In the book, the role of the 13th Texas in these battles is portrayed adequately enough for most readers, but some may find the level of tactical detail in the maps and text to be wanting in places. Overall, though, *Spartan Band* is a very solid regimental history that readers of all stripes will find well worth their time.

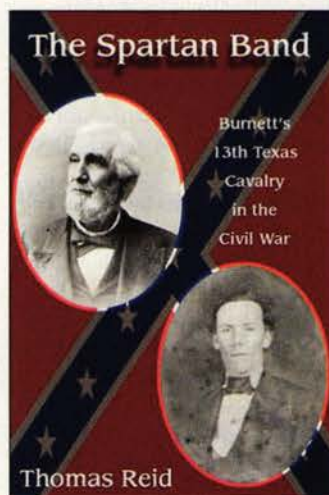
—Andrew J. Wagenhoffer
Vancouver, Washington

BRIEFINGS

THE UNCIVIL WAR: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865

By Robert R. Mackey (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. Pp. 304, \$34.95. ISBN 0-8061-3624-3).

Robert R. Mackey, a Ph.D. and career army officer who works at the Pentagon, has authored a provocative study about Confederate irregular warfare in the Upper South, with a focus on three areas—Arkansas, Kentucky-Tennessee, and northern Virginia. Using modern military jargon, Mackey clearly delineates between the three types of irregular warfare: guerrilla warfare (small bands of fighters who had no real tie to any conventional forces); partisan warfare (operations by small, elite regular units behind Union lines); and cavalry raids (conventional units raiding behind enemy lines).



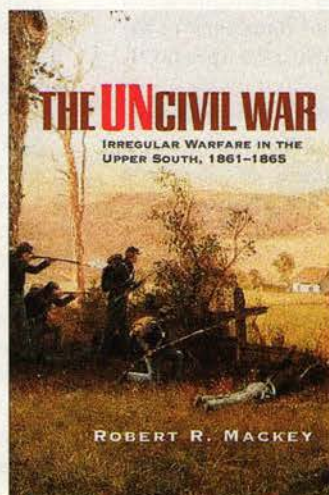
In northwestern Arkansas, Mackey concentrates on the period after the Battle of Prairie Grove, when the new Confederate commander, Thomas C. Hindman, issued orders authorizing the formation of "bands of ten" behind enemy lines to harass and impede the projected Yankee invasion of the state. While initially successful, these bands soon became nothing more than groups of marauders that pillaged both unionists and rebels in an effort to remain alive in the impoverished lands of the region. Union countermeasures largely consisted of the formation of the 1st Arkansas Cavalry, which limited the guerrillas' effectiveness. The commander of the 1st, Colonel Marcus Harrison, formed loyalists into fortified colonies guarded by local militia, established counter-guerrilla companies, and by war's end had largely destroyed the Southern bands.

In northern Virginia, Mackey focuses on Major John S. Mosby and his elite battalion. He studies Mosby's widespread success and

attributes much of it to a complete misreading of the battalion's mission on the part of Union forces. Mosby's men were enrolled Confederate soldiers, not guerrillas, and thus normal anti-guerrilla measures never worked against them. The major was also free to recruit his own men and distribute captured property, and he at times received support from Lee's army. Although the Yankees organized units to operate against Mosby (Blazer's Independent Scouts, for example), beefed up railroad patrols, and sent out heavily guarded supply trains, in the end Mosby's command survived until the end of the war, hampered at times but never destroyed.

In Kentucky and Tennessee, Braxton Bragg and other generals resorted to conventional raids by cavalry deep behind Union lines. John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest led daring and hugely successful missions in 1862, giving the rebels a false sense of the importance of raiding, because during the winter of 1862-1863 the Union commanders revitalized their own cavalry, built better fortifications to protect

railroad bridges and other points, issued stern orders against quick surrender by garrisons, and increased naval presence on western rivers. As a result, the 1863 raiding season was a complete disaster, especially Morgan's Indiana-Ohio foray. Mackey argues that Forrest's promotion took the genius Forrest away from what he did



best and saddled him with too many responsibilities to render him an effective raider. Afterward, the Confederate cavalry never effectively undertook another deep raid, which, when combined with Union countermeasures, deprived the Confederacy of this adjunct to their field armies.

Mackey provides the reader with a keen analysis of the role that irregular warfare played in the Civil War. He answers the question some historians have posed as to why the Confederacy never undertook guerrilla operations in 1865 to continue the war—Mackey convincingly argues that by 1865 the South's irregular warfare had been defeated; Lee, as well as other commanders, knew this. The major drawback with Mackey's book is its selectivity; he fails to include the numerous other Confederate guerrilla and partisan bands that operated in the upper South and that protected Confederates and threatened Unionist civilians. These bands at times effectively controlled regions of the Upper

South, suppressed Unionist activities, and foiled occupation forces. Had Mackey included this discussion, his book might be the last word on irregular warfare; without it, he has left the window open for more research and writing on the subject by future scholars.

—Richard A. Sowers
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

YANKEE AUTUMN IN ACADIANA A Narrative of the Great Texas Overland Expedition Through Southwest Louisiana, October – December 1863

By David C. Edmonds (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, 2005. Pp. 464, softcover, photos, maps, illustrations, notes, appendices. \$24.95, ISBN 1-887366-62-8).

Although it was one of the largest operations conducted in the Trans-Mississippi theatre during the Civil War, the 1863 Texas Overland Expedition remained an obscure subject for study until relatively recent times. Sandwiched between the more celebrated battle at Sabine Pass and the Red River Campaign, the autumn expedition lacks the signature battle or the compelling figures that serve to burn events into historical memory. Beyond Richard Lowe's brief but excellent introductory monograph, the only book-length study available had been David Edmonds' exhaustive but long-out-of-print *Yankee Autumn in Acadiana*.

Fortunately, Edmonds' work has now been reprinted in paperback and is available to a wider audience.

The large Federal force participating in the Texas Overland Expedition (the XIII and XIX Corps, augmented by an ad-hoc cavalry division) was under the overall leadership of General Nathaniel Banks, but under the operational command of General William Franklin. The opposing Confederate army under General Richard Taylor was vastly outnumbered and fought a delaying action over the bayous and prairies of southwest Louisiana. Franklin, with only vague instruction from Banks, advanced his army up the Teche region in fits and starts, fighting numerous skirmishes with Taylor's cavalry under Tom Green. The Union army's forward progress ended in Louisiana at Opelousas and Barre's Landing. Still lacking clear orders from above, Franklin chose to withdraw closer to his base, effectively ending the campaign without ever seriously threatening Texas. A sharp rearguard action at Bayou Bourbeux occurred during this time and was the campaign's only conflict large enough to be considered a battle. The fight resulted in a clear Confederate victory, although wins in several minor skirmishes subsequently helped the Union forces to restore the balance to some degree.

Beyond harassing the civilian population with undisciplined looting and foraging, the Union expedition accomplished little, if any-

thing. These social and economic aspects of the campaign comprise much of the book's focus. The author mined vast numbers of domestic and foreign claims commission documents and numerous newspaper, church, and courthouse records in order to provide the reader with an incredibly detailed account of



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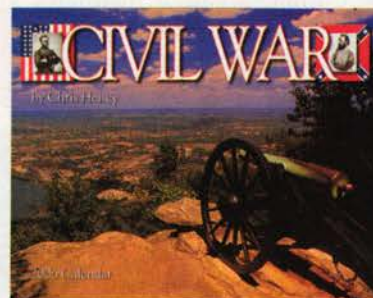
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the campaign's ruinous effects on the local multi-ethnic population.

The military features of the campaign are fully examined as well, and are supplemented by numerous and highly detailed maps of both march routes and battlefields. My only complaint in this regard is that many of the maps are poorly copied and so shrunken as to make it difficult and sometimes impossible to read the labels. This, combined with the many misspellings, makes the reader wish the book had received stronger editing.

Issues of presentation aside, however, this lengthy and definitive work admirably fills an historical void and is highly recommended for readers interested in Trans-Mississippi operations in general and Civil War Louisiana and its people in particular.

—Andrew J. Wagenhoffer
Vancouver, Washington

THE 25 BEST CIVIL WAR SITES The Ultimate Traveler's Guide to Battle- fields, Monuments, and Museums

By Clint Johnson (San Francisco: Greenline
Publications, 2005. Pp. 263, \$19.95,
ISBN 0-9759022-4-5).

Whether they are university professors, reenactors, or casual readers, most people interested in Civil War history can point to a favorite Civil War site as a source of their fascination with the topic. Visiting places where wartime events occurred and viewing the artifacts associated with them brings the conflict to life in a way that cannot be accomplished through books alone. Armed with this knowledge, and fully realizing that all Civil War sites are not created equal, Clint Johnson and Greenline Publications have attempted to assemble the ultimate travel guide in *The 25 Best Civil War Sites*.

The book, part of a new series of guides by Greenline, features concise summaries of the events interpreted at each park and museum, complete with tips on reaching them and navigating once there, candid assessments of their strengths and weaknesses, and suggested reading for those who want to learn more. Johnson ranks the sites by assigning them from one to five stars, with five indicating the most interesting. A short essay on each site's appearance today relative to how it looked during the war provides a unique perspective that will certainly help travelers create a more customized experience and more fully appreciate their surroundings during visits. Perhaps most useful is the inside information provided, the kind travelers often wish they would have known before hitting the road, such as when traffic is worst at a particular location, what routes are most scenic, and so on.

The book does not live up to its lofty title in all respects, however. Despite the implica-

tion, it is not tightly focused on the twenty-five best Civil War sites. Rather, it explores twenty-five geographic areas in which numerous sites are clustered, and throws in a few extra at the end for good measure. At times the scope of the book may cause readers to wonder why the author, having gone this far, did not include the other handful of areas he left unexplored. Also, the rationale behind the selection of sites is rather vague. Readers may have a hard time discerning whether the sites are included for their war-related significance or simply for their natural beauty, rendering the rankings somewhat arbitrary and confusing. As a guidebook intended to be a travelogue, the book would have been stronger had the sites been grouped in a way that would help travelers more fully develop their itineraries regarding the best order in which the sites can be visited. Curiously, the book includes an essay on how to become involved in reenacting that seems extraneous, given that reenactments as destinations receive little attention.

So is this "the ultimate traveler's guide to Civil War battlefields, monuments, and museums"? While it is one of the better Civil War travel guides recently published, that claim is a bit of a stretch. Casual travelers may still opt for other less in-depth studies with a broader scope, such as the most recent edition of the Conservation Fund's *The Civil War Battlefield Guide*, which features all 384 sites designated as the "principal battlefields" by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission. Appropriately priced at just under \$20 and widely available, *The 25 Best Civil War Sites* is nonetheless worthy of serious consideration by travelers planning their next Civil War site-seeing trip, because it provides a concentration of practical information that will make their journeys more rewarding.

—Mike Bunn
The Columbus Museum, Columbus, Georgia

"OUT OF THE MOUTH OF HELL" Civil War Prisons and Escapes

By Frances H. Casstevens (Jefferson, NC:
McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005. Pp. 384,
\$55.00, ISBN 0786420723).

In this contribution to the literature on Civil War prisons, Frances Casstevens introduces readers to twenty-seven of the approximately 150 prisoner of war camps in both the Union and the Confederacy. Much of the book is also concerned with prison escapes, and Casstevens gives ample space to the retelling of the most innovative and daring attempts.

"*Out of the Mouth of Hell*" is organized into two sections, the first dealing with fifteen Union prisons, the second describing twelve Confederate counterparts. Each chapter opens with a general description and notes when the camp was established, its facilities, its capac-

ity, and the approximate number of escapes. Aside from that, the chapters vary in level of detail and organization.

Casstevens offers a brief but useful breakdown of the different types of Civil War prison camps, grouping them into six categories: existing jails, coastal fortifications, former commercial buildings, barracks, tents in a fenced-off area, and stockades (p. 5). Information on the current state of these prison sites and the appendix listing prisoner populations in Federal camps between 1862 and 1865 may also be of interest.

Due to their similarities, many of the descriptions of camp life and escape stories seem redundant. The reader comes away with the well-established impression that camps were overcrowded, diseases killed thousands, living conditions were substandard, and tunneling seemed to be the preferred method of escape.

Even for a general audience, *"Out of the Mouth of Hell"* may read like a list of sufferings and runaway attempts. The writing is sometimes too generalized and the characters seem one-dimensional, with cruel guards and tortured prisoners. Casstevens relies on a variety of primary sources, but some, particularly those from non-traditional academic websites, may offer pause to more critical readers. Perhaps a greater analytical framework would have compensated for these shortcomings.

—Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai
University of Virginia

AND KEEP MOVING ON The Virginia Campaign, May–June 1864

By Mark Grimsley (Lincoln, Nebraska:
Bison Books 2005. Pp. 283, paperback,
\$16.95, ISBN 0-8032-7119-0).

Eighteen sixty-four was the American Civil War's decisive year. President Abraham Lincoln, preparing to stand for re-election in the face of increasing dissatisfaction with the war, needed military successes if his administration were to survive. A Union army had repelled the Confederate foray into Pennsylvania, but ten months of relative inaction had enabled General Robert E. Lee to repair his losses and nullify the gains from the touted Federal victory. The previous two springs, Northern forces had marched toward Richmond only to be driven back in defeat. This year had to be different, or Lincoln's presidency, and with it the war, would be lost.

Impressed with the gravity of the situation, Lincoln summoned his best general east, giving Ulysses S. Grant the twin assignments of coordinating the national war effort and bringing Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to its knees. Launched in early May, the brutal campaign of marching and fighting from the Rapidan River to Petersburg

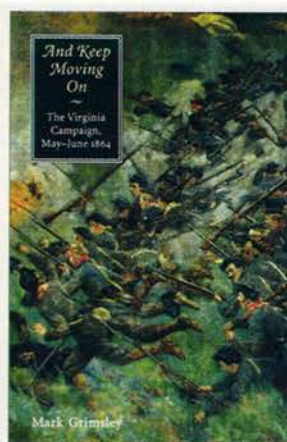
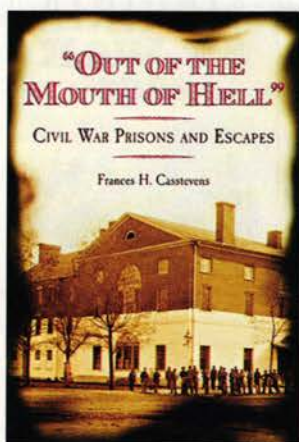
comprised one of the war's most intense and costly episodes. Packed into those forty-odd days was the Battle of the Wilderness, the assaults at Spotsylvania Court House, the maneuvers to the North Anna River, the bloody attacks at Cold Harbor, and the crossing of the James River to Petersburg. Union casualties approximated 55,000 men; Confederate losses approached 35,000, for a total of some 90,000 Americans killed, wounded, or captured. The slugging match ended with Lee pinned in a defensive line and with both antagonists so horribly mauled that mobile operations ground to a standstill. The cost had been horrific, but Grant had largely succeeded in neutralizing the chief rebel army. The war

would end ten months later with Lee still unable to resume offensive operations.

Perhaps because of its complexity, the Overland Campaign has received scant attention from Civil War historians. The standard work has been *The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65* (New York, 1883) by Andrew A. Humphreys, the Army of the Potomac's chief of staff. More recently, Noah Andre Trudeau's *Bloody Roads South: the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, May–June 1864* (Boston, 1989) did a masterful job of capturing the spirit of the campaign. Other authors, myself included, have spun detailed studies of various of the campaign's battles. Missing, however, has been a grand synthesis of the entire operation,

bringing together the disparate military, political, and social strands. Mark Grimsley's *And Keep Moving On: The Virginia Campaign, May–June, 1864* fills that gap and has been now been issued in a paperback edition.

Grimsley does not purport to conduct fresh research or to uncover new information. His book is a synthesis, and he succeeds admirably in his objective. Often overlooked is the fact that Grant's operation in-



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volved the coordination of several armies moving on Lee, with epic fights, not only in central Virginia, but in the Shenandoah Valley and south of Richmond. Grimsley gives due attention to the multiple prongs of Grant's grand offensive, describing the salient features of the battles with verve while placing them within the campaign's larger framework. Covered also are the various political influences, Union as well as Confederate, and the campaign's profound impact on the home fronts, North and South. In reviewing military considerations, Grimsley keeps his spot-

light not only on Grant and Lee, but on their subordinate commanders as well, venturing well-considered reflections on how the generals performed. Especially engaging is the book's final chapter, with its balanced examination of the overall conduct of the campaign and of the operation's broader place in history.

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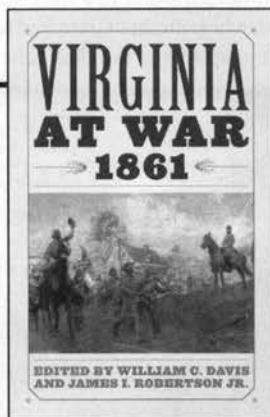
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THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR THROUGH BRITISH EYES

Dispatches from British Diplomats

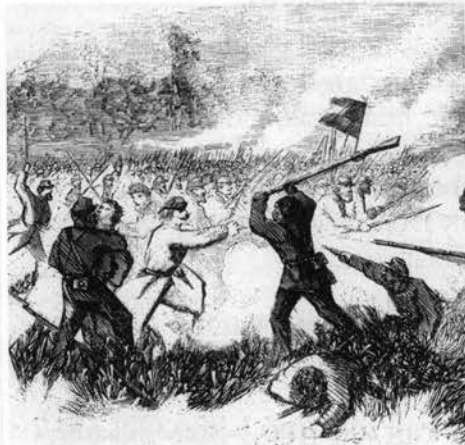
Edited by James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes. Vol. 2, April 1862-February 1863; Vol. 3, February 1863-December 1865 (Kent, Oh.: Kent State University Press, 2005. Pp. 353, 378. Index. \$50 per volume. ISBN 0-87338-830-5; ISBN 0-87338-831-3).

These two volumes complete a set that instantly becomes an essential source for anyone studying the diplomatic history of the American Civil War. Much of the correspondence is from Lord Lyons, the British minister to Washington for most of the war. Lyons and other British diplomats regularly summarized the latest news from America. The reader quickly gets a sense of the confusing and often misleading contemporary reactions to major events, and even dry, matter-of-fact diplomatic correspondence reveals something of the nation's political and emotional tenor. Both volumes also contain occasional reports from British officials in the Confederacy. The editing is minimal—largely confined to identifying persons mentioned in the dispatches.

Lyons predicted that the spring of 1862 would likely be the decisive period of the conflict, and there are especially good reports on the panicky atmosphere in Washington during McClellan's unsuccessful campaign on the Virginia Peninsula. Aside from the expected material on consular business, conversations with Secretary of State William H. Seward about problems with foreign diplomats in New Orleans, and discussions with the French Minister Edouard Henri Mercier, there are also some fairly extensive analyses of domestic American politics. Bounty problems, the fall 1862 elections, and even the political situation in New York all received considerable attention. Both the British and French closely followed the Union's evolving policies toward emancipation and colonization. There is less discussion of possible European mediation in the Civil War than might be expected, but useful material on this question appeared in several dispatches. Lyons and his diplomatic colleagues often tried to assess—with widely varying degrees of success—the significance of military campaigns. After Abraham Lincoln's reelection in 1864 and as the war winds down, the documents became increasingly routine, though there are a few interesting items on the early phases of Reconstruction.

Except for those studying foreign relations, students of the Civil War have often neglected the war's diplomatic context and sources. Military and political historians in particular, however, can glean useful information from this valuable collection of documents. The British assessments of American racial attitudes, for example, are well worth reading.

—George C. Rable, University of Alabama



DO YOU KNOW? ANSWERS

(Questions are on page 7)

1. George H. Pendleton.
2. Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, June 7, 1863.
3. Walt Whitman.
4. Stephen R. Mallory (secretary of the navy) and John H. Reagan (postmaster general).
5. Memphis, Tennessee.
6. Arnold Elzey.

Left: Alfred R. Waud's depiction of hand-to-hand combat during the battle at Milliken's Bend.

Crossfire

(continued from page 7) concept, I feel that, if pushed too far, it abuses and dilutes such terms as, in this case, "organized resistance." Professor Newton's suggestion that we think of ant-hills has its own built-in problem. Anthills are developed not by individual actors unconsciously or spontaneously coordinating their efforts, but rather by discrete, well-organized groups—tribes might be a helpful term—that pursue well-established, well-coordinated routines that have gone on for centuries. Ant-hills don't just happen in response to some artificial stimulus. In addition, each anthill operates as a separate entity; groups of anthills don't, to my knowledge, consciously or unconsciously coordinate their actions with one another.

Nowhere does the professor present evidence that the resistance he perceives was not already well under way prior to secession and Fort Sumter, or that it changed in any conceptual way once the war began. As one example, in his parenthetical note on p. 55, he offers no evidence that blacks who had hoarded U.S. currency had not been doing so long before the shooting started. Much of his article suggests not only that the resistance was already in place, but, more significantly, that it had developed and would have continued quite without reference to the outbreak of (dare we say it?) organized fighting.

What the writer sees as organized resistance seems no more than group survival skills at work at the local level. It might best be called "disorganized resistance," since as he points out, there was no hierarchy, no chain of command, no top-down leadership, no strategic plan or overview. In short, his own article suggests that black resistance was anything but organized beyond the local level. History from the bottom up is all well and good, but as I think Professor Newton would agree, it doesn't change the fact that soldiers at Gettysburg were part of a thoroughly organized army run by top-down generals. That isn't a preconceived notion about what "organized" means. Where black resistance is concerned, there was no "top down."

A further concern involves the audience *North & South* is trying to reach. I am reasonably well educated, and I have been reading Civil War history for more than forty years. I enjoy this magazine because it involves popular history that goes beyond the superficial and explores a variety of nooks, crannies, and alleys that offer a deeper view of the war. But when articles begin tossing around arcana like "scale-free networks" and the "80/20 rule"

without some substantive definition, I think the magazine is becoming just a little too academic for the average reader.

—Mark M. Smith, Las Vegas, Nevada

STEVE NEWTON RESPONDS:

Strangely enough, even in 2005 the notion that African Americans behind Confederate lines had and pursued an agenda of their own remains controversial, even without adding a dollop of what Mr. Smith characterizes as "arcana" with emergence theory.

Mr. Smith suggests that I did not provide evidence that the war changed the nature of African-American resistance. I would point him to several references in the article to collective bargaining by field hands, participation by Richmond slaves in creating sanctuaries for rebel deserters, and the overtly political Fourth of July celebrations held each year by the slave population in Montgomery, Alabama. When the historian attempts to patch together a coherent mosaic out of admittedly fragmentary evidence, seemingly local responses begin to show regional, statewide, and even national patterns.



African-American resistance to slavery was not a top-down phenomenon, and it is ironic that Mr. Smith borrows my own comparison to the armies at Gettysburg to misuse it. American history is full of examples of incredibly important historical movements that occurred without the large-scale hierarchical leadership cadre that Mr. Smith sees as necessary to call a process "organized." Settlers moving in small wagon trains along the Oregon and California Trails generally possessed no organization above the level of an individual group of wagons, and yet in bulk constituted a movement that changed the face of the frontier. The Lowell "mill girls" organized themselves into social groups and then the first labor unions without benefit of "top-down" leadership.

I apologize for confusing anyone with the passing reference to scale-free networks or the 80/20 rule. My purpose was not to inject the jargon of academia, but to point out that emergence, as an increasingly established scientific field, has developed strong theoretical tools for

examining social networks as different as ant hills and the neighborhoods of Birmingham, England.

Let's not lose sight of the main point of the article: African Americans behind Confederate lines were not passive spectators in the American Civil War who did nothing different than they had always done, while waiting patiently for blue-clad Yankees to release them from bondage. To dismiss their resistance to slavery and the Confederacy as unimportant because one cannot discover a Nat Turner or a Nelson Mandela sitting somewhere in the background pulling strings and issuing orders is at best naive and at worst disingenuous.

★ ★ ★

In the latest issue of *North & South*, there's an article titled "African Americans Resist the Confederacy" by Steven H. Newton. In his article, Mr. Newton makes reference to the "massacres of African Americans at Fort Pillow...." In his book, *That Devil Forrest*, John Allan Wyeth says there weren't the massacres that many people believed happened. He contends, and I agree with his account of the events, that the African-American troops at the fort were given the key to the whiskey storeroom by an officer. By the time the alleged massacres took place, there was a lot of confusion. Many of the fort's defenders were drunk. Some did try to surrender, only to take arms against Forrest's command, and were subsequently shot. Others, in an alcoholic haze, made for the river to try and get to the gunboat. The gunboat was supposed to have taken part in the fort's defense but never fired a shot. All one hears about the Fort Pillow affair is the northern portrayal of events. Nobody seems to want to hear both sides of the story.

I do realize that this is just a mention as part of Mr. Newton's article, but to arrive at any conclusion one must hear both sides of the story.

—Greg Diamond, via email

STEVE NEWTON RESPONDS:

Anyone who still relies on Wyeth's biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest as definitive history is hardly in a position to advocate that "both sides of the story" about Fort Pillow should be told. Wyeth was hardly a disinterested researcher; he was an unmitigated apologist for Forrest and his troops. Albert Castel first demolished the "there was no massacre at Fort Pillow" school of thought some five decades ago, and other historians have amplified his careful reconstruction of the events. But there is a much simpler method of confronting what happened at Fort Pillow. Check Confederate accounts from the week immediately following the engagement (before the

killings had gained notoriety in the North). Read letters from Tennessee cavalymen bragging about standing in the blood and brains of the soldiers (both African Americans and Tennessee Unionists) killed after they had laid down their weapons. Only long after the fact did Confederates begin remembering all those exculpatory details about liquor stores and drunken, crazed Negroes.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN BIAS?

There are two reasons why I stopped subscribing to *North & South*: (1) I've simply moved on to *Military Chronicles*, and am waiting patiently for the second issue; and (2) I've

endured all the subtle swipes at Christianity I care to take from this, or any, magazine. (There are no cheeks left.)

Frequent "Crossfire" contributor Dennis Middlebrooks of Brooklyn can hardly write to *North & South* without adding a jab or two of his own, which he has done twice in the last two issues. Naturally, he has a perfect right to send in as many entries as he wishes and to say whatever crosses his mind. I simply wonder why he feels the need to pounce so often, and why *N&S* continues to oblige without giving balance. Imagine, if you will, the outcry if Judaism or American Indians were put down with the same frequency.

North & South is not responsible for matters of faith and theology, but continued cuts in articles and letters, again without balance, is repugnant to a portion of your readership. What follows will not satisfy those who mislead or purposely patronize, but I made an earlier defense that went unheeded and have now been goaded again.

Some Southern pastors of Protestant congregations did, no doubt, promote the cause of secession and slavery. An earlier editorial that such ministers were the norm has never been proven. Generals Lee and Jackson, both Christians, disapproved of slavery, despite what may have come out of context from the pulpit. Likewise, on the other side there were Union officers who approved of the institution.

God permitted and regulated certain behavior under the Old Covenant law that He did not, as ultimately revealed, approve of. Divorce, polygamy, and chattel slavery—not the same as indentured servitude—come to mind. Beyond that, sworn enemies of ancient Israel (i.e., the former enemies of the Lord) were put under forced labor for reasons that are too deep for much of the high-minded intelligentsia of today.

With the dawn of the New Covenant, slavery was universal under Roman dominion, in conditions that would last for another four hundred years. Jesus and His Apostles made no attempt to overthrow the institution by force. Despite bitter and deadly persecution, as the Gospel advanced, slavery—not counting Muslim countries—began to lose its grip, and was ultimately extinguished, because Christians like Wilberforce and Lincoln fought for a higher power. Yes, it took time, but without Christianity it would never have occurred.

New Testament commands for slaves and slaveholders were for early Christians who lived in another time and under very different circumstances. The founding of America did not bring about a revival of Roman rule and practice.

Consider the following passages:

(OT) Exodus 21:16: "Whoever steals [kidnaps] a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death."

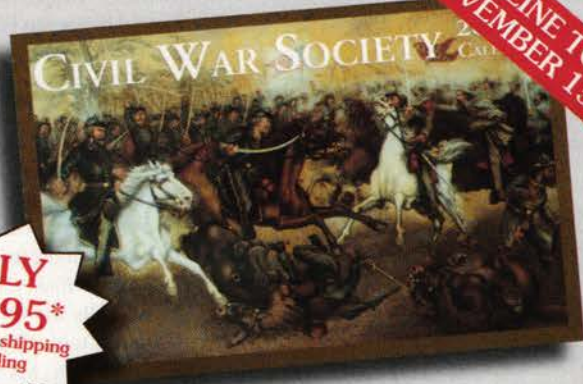
(NT) 1 Corinthians 7:21, 23: "Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. . . . You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men."

Galatians 5:1 (used as a metaphor): "For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

With few exceptions, Southern Evangelicals of the twenty-first century do not defend African slavery (Africans themselves did the original selling) as a just cause for the great conflict of the nineteenth century. Nor do they

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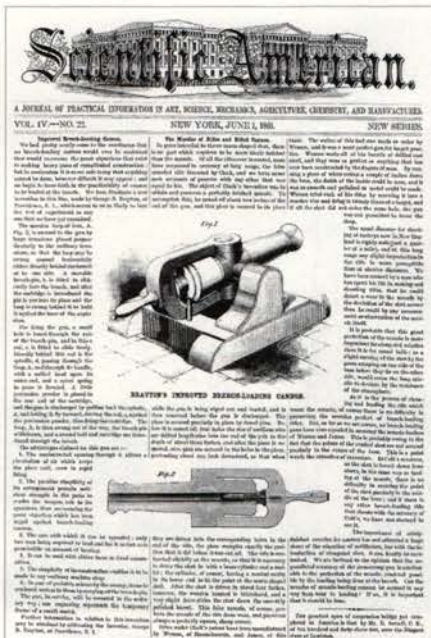
If critical remarks and putdowns are going to continue in this otherwise fine magazine, please allow some balance from now on.

—M. Edward Hughes
Candler, North Carolina

Knapsack

(continued from page 10)

Discarding Porter's music and poetry, Munn turned *Scientific American* into a paper chiefly devoted to inventions and published a weekly list of all patents, with associated claims, issued by the Patent Office. There was a paucity of expertise in patent law, except in the largest cities (George Garrett Sickles, father of the incredible Dan Sickles, commanded a good portion of New York City's patent business at that time), and would-be inventors flooded the magazine with requests for advice. To meet the demand, Munn launched the "Scientific American Patent Agency" in 1847, and established a reputation for competence and honesty. The agency became the foremost of the day, and in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, Munn & Co. secured one-third of all patents issued by the U.S. Patent Office.



Front cover image of *Scientific American*, June 1, 1861.

Scientific American endured its own "secession crisis" when, in the December 1, 1860, issue, the magazine featured an engraving of President-elect Abraham Lincoln's 1849 invention of "an improved method of lifting vessels over shoals." Lincoln—the only U.S. president to be issued a patent—received Patent No. 6,469 for his invention of a bellows attached to the hull of a ship so that, when inflated, the vessel could float clear of obstacles. Thinking

that it would interest their readers to see an invention that "emanated from the brain of so distinguished an official," the editors concluded with the hope that Lincoln would exhibit "better success in presiding as Chief Magistrate over the people of the entire Union than he had as an inventor in introducing his invention upon the western waters."

Weeks later, in a subsequent issue, the magazine reported with bemusement that a Northern subscriber accused them of "undertaking to cast a slur upon 'Honest Old Abe,'" and guessed that the irritated reader "jumped at the conclusion that we had trumped it [Lincoln's invention] up for the purpose of

casting ridicule upon his candidate." The matter did not end there—Southern readers threatened to cancel their subscriptions (some actually did) and accused *Scientific American* of rejoicing "over the election of a Black Republican rail-splitter." One Southern wag wrote in feigned indignation that the "publication of His Excellency's invention would enable the Northerners to ride into Charleston at low water, and thus reinforce Fort Sumter."

Scientific American weathered another aggravation when, in the summer of 1861, Northern and Southern papers published a letter, purported to be from the magazine's patent agency, to an unnamed New Orleans entrepre-



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neur proposing that he conspire with Munn & Co. to secure control of existing patents so as to establish a monopoly on invention and thereby "dictate our own terms to manufacturers and mechanics" when the Confederacy achieved its independence. The Southern paper rejoiced in the assumption of a rebel victory, but denounced the alleged proposal as the machinations of "rabid Black Republicans" with plans "to make money out of us [by] asking a Southern citizen to become a partner in [their] Yankee scheme."

The editors responded to the potentially scandalous charge in the August 17, 1861, issue. They insisted that the letter was "an impudent forgery from beginning to end" and declared the author an "unmitigated scamp" who deserved "to be strung up within the coils of a hempen noose." They admitted being solicited by men, North and South, to enter into arrangements for securing patents in the Confederacy, but maintained that to "connive in any way with those who are in arms against [the government's] authority" would be treasonable. The editors concluded by stating that if the independence of the Confederacy was ever recognized, they would be prepared to do business for inventors in those states as with any other foreign power.

The general format of *Scientific American* remained the same for many years: an engraving and description of a notable invention graced the front page, followed by a list of newly granted patents, an editorial page, a query column, and advertising. For dozens of issues during the Civil War, the front page featured engravings and reports on innovations associated with warfare, including improvements in cannon, projectiles, rifles, and shipbuilding. For example, the paper reported enthusiastically on the potential and performance of the ironclads. A section on "Military and Naval Affairs" delivered the latest war news; indeed, on June 1, 1861, the publishers announced a change in the mailing day, from Tuesday to Friday, so that "the *Scientific American* [would] have as late war news as any other weekly paper."

One of the truly unique features of *Scientific American* was a section entitled "Notes and Queries." The magazine received dozens of pieces of mail each day. Many related to mundane subscription matters, but most were questions from aspiring inventors who trusted the magazine to comment on the feasibility or originality of their ideas. During the Civil War, *Scientific American* responded to hundreds of potential advances in military technology sent by readers, sometimes brutally ("To M.F. of Ill. —Your shell filled with chloroform and cayenne pepper would be a very harmless affair") and sometimes enthusiastically ("To H.L. of N.Y. —Spectacles which would enable persons to see at night would be very useful [and] would be of great advantage to night-scouting parties").

Scientific American, like many magazines and newspapers, faced financial trials during the Civil War. The hostilities created a serious shortage of newsprint and a corresponding increase in cost—more than forty percent by the end of 1862 and more than double at the height of the war—and taxes on newsprint and advertising strained publishers' budgets. As a consequence, *Scientific American* raised its subscription fee in January 1863 from two to three dollars annually, a cost that remained unchanged during the rest of the nineteenth century. The magazine also suffered a severe blow in circulation caused by the break in communication between the North and South. Just before the war, the magazine sold nearly 30,000 copies a week. By early 1863, with the loss of Southern subscribers, circulation fell to less than 16,000, but rebounded to more than 50,000 within a decade of the war's end.

In the early twentieth century, *Scientific American* continued to report on emerging technologies before news of the innovations reached the general population (the magazine published photographs of the Wright brothers' plane nearly two years before their suc-

cessful Kitty Hawk flight). Still, the magazine faced increased competition in its patent agency business and from other like-minded publications, and circulation fell to Civil War era numbers by the 1940s. In 1948 Munn & Co., owners of *Scientific American* for a century, sold the magazine to Gerard Piel, Dennis Flanagan, and Donald Miller for \$40,000. Under new management, the magazine regained its popularity by reporting on groundbreaking events such as the advent of personal computers, launches of manned and unmanned spacecraft, and medical advances such as the polio vaccine and the artificial heart.

The magazine established a global presence when a German-based publishing group, Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, bought *Scientific American, Inc.*, in 1986. Following in the footsteps of Munn & Co., who began publishing a Spanish-language scientific paper in the 1890s (*La América científica e industrial*), the magazine is now published in fifteen languages and has a worldwide circulation of over a million copies.

—Contributed by James M. Schmidt

INCIDENTS OF WAR David versus Goliath: The Short Career of the Confederate Privateer *Petrel*



Above: A depiction of the *St. Lawrence* sending a shot through the Confederate privateer *Petrel*.

On April 15, 1861, three days after the opening shots of the Civil War were fired on Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln made a call for 75,000 volunteers to help put down what he termed an insurrection by the seceded states. Two days later Confederate president Jefferson Davis responded by announcing that Lincoln intended to invade the South, and in turn called for thousands of volunteers to defend Southern soil. As part of his proclamation Davis invited applications for letters of marque and reprisal, an old maritime custom

that allowed a government at war to commission privately owned and armed ships—called "privateers"—to prey on the merchantmen and naval vessels of its enemy. At a conference in London in 1854 the two principal naval powers, Britain and France, had promoted a ban on privateers, which was accepted by most seafaring nations. But the United States, looking back to the work of its privateers during the Revolution and the War of 1812, had not signed the ban. So it was not bound by the ban, and thus neither was the Confederacy

(one of the niceties of international law is that even rebellious, separatist, or successor regimes are bound by agreements of the former sovereign power). To counter Davis' invitation for privateers, Lincoln on April 19 proclaimed a naval blockade of Southern ports and declared that any vessel caught while operating under a letter of marque would be considered engaged in piracy and her crew subject to execution.

On May 6 the Confederate Congress passed an act authorizing letters of marque and set up the administrative procedure to obtain them. Soon requests began coming in, and by the middle of the month letters of marque were issued. The first successful privateer to put to sea was the New Orleans towboat *Calhoun*. The *Calhoun* left the Crescent City on May 16 and steamed to the mouth of the Mississippi, where that evening she captured her first prize, the bark *Ocean Eagle* of Rockland, Maine. In the following days the *Calhoun* and the privateers that followed her took more prizes.

Inspired by the news of the successes of the early privateers, a group of ten Charleston gentlemen decided to set up a limited partnership and apply for a letter of marque. The group brought the eighty-two-ton schooner *Petrel* from the South Carolina government to use as a privateer. The *Petrel* was originally the Charleston pilot boat *Eclipse*, before becoming the two-gun U.S. Revenue Cutter *William Aiken*. The *Aiken* was stationed at Charleston when South Carolina seceded at the end of December 1860, and was promptly seized by state authorities and renamed *Petrel*. The *Petrel* at first was used by the South Carolina Coast and Harbor Police and was later lent to the Marine School of Charleston for use as a school ship. At the end of May 1861 the South Carolina government offered the *Petrel* and its other state navy vessels to the Confederacy. However, the Confederate navy only accepted two of the ships, finding the *Petrel* and most of the others unsuited to its needs. The state then offered the *Petrel* for sale as being suitable for privateering. After it was purchased by the Charleston group, the *Petrel* was issued a "commission for letters of marque and reprisal . . . on the 10th of July, 1861" by the Charleston custom collector's office.

The *Petrel* was fitted as a privateer and placed under command of William Perry, one of her owners. She ran out of Charleston in the very early hours of July 28, 1861, on her first privateering cruise. Just after daylight Captain Perry sighted Captain Hugh Y. Purviance's frigate USS *St. Lawrence*, which was on blockade duty off Charleston. At about the same time, the *St. Lawrence* spotted the *Petrel* and headed toward her. Perry, realizing that his two small guns were no match for the Federal man-of-war's fifty-two, immediately withdrew. After a four-hour chase, the *St. Lawrence* caught up with the privateer. Instead

of surrendering to his more powerful adversary, Perry raised the Confederate flag and fired three shots at the frigate, one of which slightly damaged a sail and yard. The *St. Lawrence* replied with her forecastle battery, sending one shot through the privateer's bow with fatal effect. With his vessel sinking, Perry struck his colors and abandoned ship. The *St. Lawrence* quickly dispatched her boats to pick up the *Petrel's* crew. Unfortunately, two of the privateer's thirty-eight-man crew drowned before they could be rescued. The remaining thirty-six were taken aboard the *St. Lawrence* as prisoners and placed in manacles.

The log of the *St. Lawrence*, published in the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, gives the following description of the encounter:

July 28, 1861.—Off Charleston.

At 6 a. m. commenced chasing sail off lee bow. At 10 came up with her, when she hoisted the Confederate flag and fired a gun. Beat to quarters and commenced firing. The schooner fired three shots, one of which passed through the mainsail and took a splinter out of the main yard. The schooner hauled down her flag after receiving two shots, one of which struck her bows, and she sunk from the effects of it at 10:30. Got out the boats and picked up the crew. She proved to be the *Petrel*, of Charleston.

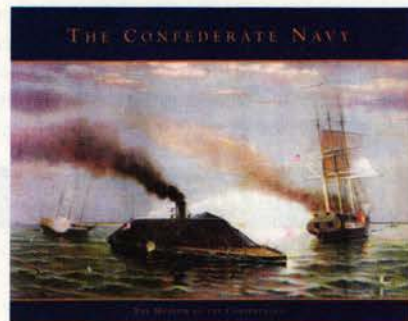
Two other versions of the encounter between the *Petrel* and the *St. Lawrence* have appeared over the years. The first was a tall tale run in some northern newspapers in which the *St. Lawrence* had disguised herself as a merchantman and decoyed the privateer into attacking her. According to historian William Morrison Robinson Jr., "Captain Perry positively denied this story and said that he was aware of the character of his adversary from the beginning of the chase." The second was given by former Confederate naval officer J. Thomas Scharf in his book *History of the Confederate States Navy*.

Scharf wrote that the *Petrel* "sailed out of Charleston, and stood for the U.S. frigate *St. Lawrence*, which she mistook for a merchantman, as all her ports were closed." Scharf's account also appears to be in error. Furthermore, Scharf left out the four-hour chase, and said only that when the *Petrel* "got within range she fired three shots without doing any damage" and then was instantly sunk by the *St. Lawrence's* returned fire. Scharf also puts the *Petrel's* crew at forty, four of whom drowned.

Several days after being captured, the *Petrel's* crew was transferred to the USS *Flag* off Savannah, for transportation to Philadelphia to stand trial for piracy and treason. Upon arriving in Philadelphia, they were put into Moyamensing Prison to await trial, and

THE CONFEDERATE NAVY

The Confederate Navy is a full color illustrated catalogue to accompany the exhibit at The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia (on display through December 2006). Written by Museum historian John M. Coski, the catalogue features the museum's rich collection of original artworks, cartes-de-visite, documents, ship plans, models, uniforms, swords, flags, and personal possessions, it tells the stories of Southern naval officers, ships, technological innovations, and operations—especially the legendary commerce raiders *Florida*, *Alabama*, and *Shenandoah*.



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the possibility of execution. In the meantime, with the capture of more privateers, the Confederate Congress passed a resolution that mandated the selection of Yankee prisoners of war as hostages, to balance the treatment of Confederate privateers held as Union prisoners. In October, William Smith, a captured crewman from the privateer *Jefferson Davis*, was found guilty of piracy and sentenced to death. In response, Confederate secretary of war Judah Benjamin directed that the highest-ranking Union prisoner of war be executed in the event Smith's sentence was carried out. Fortunately for both men, Smith's conviction was overturned, and subsequently all captured rebel privateers were treated as prisoners of war, thus ending what could have been a tit-for-tat series of executions. Although the

Petrel's crew were indicted, they were not brought to trial and were sent home during the prisoner exchanges of the following summer.

Though the *Petrel's* career as a privateer had lasted only hours, it still weighs heavily in the pages of history, for this incident established that the crews of captured privateers were to be treated as prisoners of war, not pirates.

—Contributed by James M. Powles

Some More Confederate OERs

Army regulations require that commanders annually rate the officers under their command. Today, this is normally referred to as an "OER," better known as Department of the Army Form 67-8, "Officer Evaluation Report." In previous issues of *North & South**

we have published quotes from similar reports, which reveal comments and criticisms about the performance and character of various Civil War commanders. Here are some more that relate to prominent Confederates:

- President Jefferson Davis: "... brave, generous, and impetuous." —Major General Abner Doubleday, U.S.A.
- General Braxton Bragg: "... tyrannical, impetuous, narrow minded ... [and] unfit for command.... [T]oo weak to fight, too unpopular to run." —Brigadier General William Preston, C.S.A.
- "... [an] able officer [His] greatest defect was that he did not win the love and confidence of either the officers or men." —Lieutenant General Alexander P. Stewart, C.S.A.

The Battle of Sabine Pass

Vol. 8, #6



On September 8, 1863, a small group of Confederates under the leadership of Lieutenant Richard "Dick" Dowling repulsed a Union force ten times their size at Sabine Pass in Texas.

—Edward T. Cotham Jr.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

"THINKING ABOUT THE UNTHINKABLE": In January 1864 General Patrick Cleburne controversially proposed that the Confederacy "immediately commence training a large reserve of the most courageous of our slaves" as soldiers. —Bruce Levine

"OF BEASTS AND BARBARITIES": The press' treatment of issues surrounding the occupation of New Orleans in April 1862. —Andrew S. Coopersmith

"AFRICAN AMERICANS RESIST THE CONFEDERACY": The presence and significance of organized anti-Confederate resistance, behind rebel lines, on the part of free and enslaved African Americans. —Steven H. Newton

"CLOCKS, CAMPS, AND PRISONS": An examination of how Civil War soldiers struggled to abandon their antebellum understanding and use of time in the face of the new realities of military life. —Cheryl A. Wells

"THE BATTLE OF PLEASANT HILL": The fight at Pleasant Hill would be marked by blunders on both sides. —Curtis Milbourn and Steve Bounds

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William Carroll



Charles Clark



Edward Johnson



William Preston



Daniel Ruggles



Robert Toombs

- General Joseph E. Johnston: "Take it all in all, the South, in my opinion, had no better soldier than Joe Johnston—none at least that gave me more trouble." — *Lieutenant General U.S. Grant, U.S.A.*
"Joe Johnston gave me more anxiety than any others." — *U.S. Grant*
- General Robert E. Lee: "kind and generous to all subordinates, admired by all women, respected by all men. He was the model of a soldier and the very beau ideal of a Christian man." — *Major General Montgomery Meigs, U.S.A.*
"... the very best soldier I ever saw in the field." — *Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, U.S.A.*
"I never could see in his achievements what justifies his reputation." — *U.S. Grant*
- Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell: "[H]e was a splendid soldier until he lost his leg and married his wife. I don't think he was valuable afterwards." — *Brigadier General Eppa Hunton, C.S.A.*
"... a fine officer, but would never take responsibility of exceeding his orders" — *General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A.*
- Lieutenant General Wade Hampton: "... the greatest natural cavalry leader of our or any other country." — *Lieutenant General James Longstreet, C.S.A.*
- Lieutenant General Thomas J. Jackson: "I have but to show him my design, and know that if it can be done it will be done." — *Robert E. Lee*
"... mad as a march hare no fool" — *Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell, C.S.A.*
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- Major General Mansfield Lovell: "... as fit to command divisions as any men in our service." — *Joseph E. Johnston*
"A brilliant, energetic, and accomplished officer." — *Judah P. Benjamin, secretary of war, C.S.A., 1862*
- Brigadier General William H. Carroll: "not safe ... to intrust with command." — *General Braxton Bragg, C.S.A.*

* *North & South* Volume 6, Number 5, and Volume 7, Number 6.

- Brigadier General Charles Clark: "[A] vigilant, prudent, capable commander." — *Alexander P. Stewart*
- Brigadier General Edward "Allegheny" Johnson: "... uniformly distinguished for hard and successful fighting." — *Richard S. Ewell*
- Brigadier General William Preston: "The gallant manner in which he conducted his division to the assault [at Chickamauga] contributed in a manner second to none to ... deciding the fate of the day." — *Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner, C.S.A.*
- Brigadier General Daniel Ruggles: "... a weak vessel" — *Major General William T. Sherman, U.S.A.*
- Brigadier General Robert Toombs: "... disagrees with himself between meals." — *President Jefferson Davis, C.S.A.*

FOR THE RECORD

"I Could Still Hear That Distressing Howl..."



Landsman Francis Butts

Historians of the Civil War have been astonishingly successful in digging up and bringing to light an enormous and ever-growing number of primary source documents. Newly edited private journals or collections of letters appear monthly, and each of these provides one more pixel of light for the historian to aid in understanding how America's greatest national trauma affected those who lived through it. There are, however, a few iconic sources that scholars return to time and again because of their unique value as first-hand, eyewitness testimony. The two sources most often cited are the invaluable *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (and another set on the navies) and the after-the-fact remembrances gathered into the four-volume

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collection known to generations of Civil War students as *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. The problem with this second "primary" source is that while the articles in *Battles and Leaders* are unquestionably first hand, they were written many years after the events they describe, and often reveal more about how the author wanted to be remembered than what he actually thought or did at the time.

Among the articles in the first volume of *Battles and Leaders* are nine pieces about the ships and sailors that engaged in the first duel between ironclads in Hampton Roads in March 1862. It is a treasure trove of first-hand information. None other than John Ericsson himself describes "The Building of the 'Monitor.'" Both John M. Brooke and John L. Porter, who argued all of their lives about which one of them deserved primary responsibility for the design of the CSS *Virginia*, tell their stories. Samuel Dana Greene, who took over command of the *Monitor* when John Worden fell wounded, describes what happened "In the 'Monitor' Turret" during the battle.

dramatic stuff. But it was written in 1885, some twenty-three years after the fact, and one wonders if the vividness of the account owes something to those intervening years. Jeff Johnston, the historian of the *Monitor* National Marine Sanctuary, has long suspected that Butts took advantage of a surge in popular interest about the *Monitor* during the 1880s to claim his own moment of fame.

Perhaps the most memorable passage in Butts' account is his tale about his last few minutes inside the *Monitor's* turret. Concerned about the rising water, he writes, he took off his new coat and his boots and, rolling them up, stuffed them into one of the big guns, carefully replacing the tompion, or plug, in the muzzle. At that time he was still hopeful that the ship might be saved and he could retrieve them. Then the ship's cat, perhaps sensing disaster as animals can, set up a yowling that was positively unnerving. The cat, Butts wrote, "was sitting on the breach of one of the guns," and was "howling one of those hoarse and solemn tunes which no one can appreciate who is not filled with the su-

ries of the *Monitor*, which recorded minute details about the fascinating new ship, ever mentioned a cat. So despite the irresistibility of Butts' account, it remained unconfirmed.

Almost from the moment in August 2002 that the team of NOAA scientists, U.S. Navy divers, and The Mariners' Museum conservators managed to lift the massive turret of the *Monitor*, containing both the big guns as well as a century and a half of sediment, from the bottom of the Continental Shelf sixteen miles off Cape Hatteras, there has been interest within the Civil War community about the cat. For more than a year, as conservators at The Mariners' Museum in Newport News worked to stabilize and carefully unpack the turret and its contents, the most frequent question from visitors and the media has been: What about the cat?

Now at last it can be told: There was no cat. According to Mariners' Museum assistant conservator David Krop, "We have ... failed to find any trace of organic material such as leather, wool or bone" in either gun. In other words, not only was there no cat, but no wool jacket or boots either. The news did not surprise Jeff Johnston. "The excavations confirmed my suspicion that Francis Butts fabricated the whole story," he declared.

Of course if Butts fabricated the story of his lonely moments in the rapidly filling turret, how much else did he fabricate? What about the tale Butts tells that as he rushed down the passageway he saw the ship's chief engineer, Samuel Lewis, seasick in his bunk? Or the story of how Ensign George Frederickson, sensing his own death, handed his pocket watch to Master's Mate Peter Williams? Or how he, Butts, was nearly the last man off the *Monitor*, insisting that Captain John P. Bankhead precede him into the last boat? Is any of it true?

It may be that Butts' story of the loss of the *Monitor* falls into the category of self-serving memoirs like those of John B. Gordon or Horace Porter: full of dramatic *sturm und drang*, but more useful as fable than history. But thanks to the efforts of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and the hard-working conservators at the USS *Monitor* Center at The Mariners' Museum, students of the Civil War have one less tiny mystery to resolve.

—Contributed by Craig L. Symonds,
chief historian of the USS *Monitor*
Center at The Mariners' Museum,
Newport News, Virginia.

NOTE: The *Monitor's* turret, including its twin XI-inch Dahlgren guns, as well as a host of artifacts from the original *Monitor*, are now on display at The Mariners' Museum, and will be featured in the new USS *Monitor* Center, which will open in March 2007, the 145th anniversary of the Battle of Hampton Roads. □



CARTOON BY BRIAN KRAUS

Other articles focus on the subsequent history of these iconic warships. Francis P. Butts, a young volunteer from Rhode Island who was rated as a landsman (a "haymaker" in the parlance of the day) on the *Monitor*, describes in vivid detail how it felt to be trapped inside the iron-armored warship during the *Monitor's* harrowing—and eventually fatal—passage down the Carolina coast toward Charleston in December 1862. "The sea rolled over us as if our vessel were a rock in the ocean," he wrote, and soon he saw "the water pouring in through the coal bunkers." Butts' account allows us to feel the rising panic inside the vessel as the storm gradually but in inexorably overwhelmed the vessel. It is

perceptions which I had been taught by the sailors, who are always afraid to kill a cat." So unnerved was he by this plaintive and mournful noise, that Butts grabbed the cat, stuffed it inside the other gun, and replaced the tompion. In spite of that, he claimed, "I could still hear that distressing howl."

It is a vivid story, if somewhat horrifying, and students of the Civil War navies, unable to resist it, have quoted it scores of times. Indeed it is hard to find an account of the USS *Monitor* that does not include the tale of the cat-in-the-cannon. At the same time, however, there were always doubts about it. No other survivor of the *Monitor* mentioned a ship's cat; no contemporary newspaper sto-

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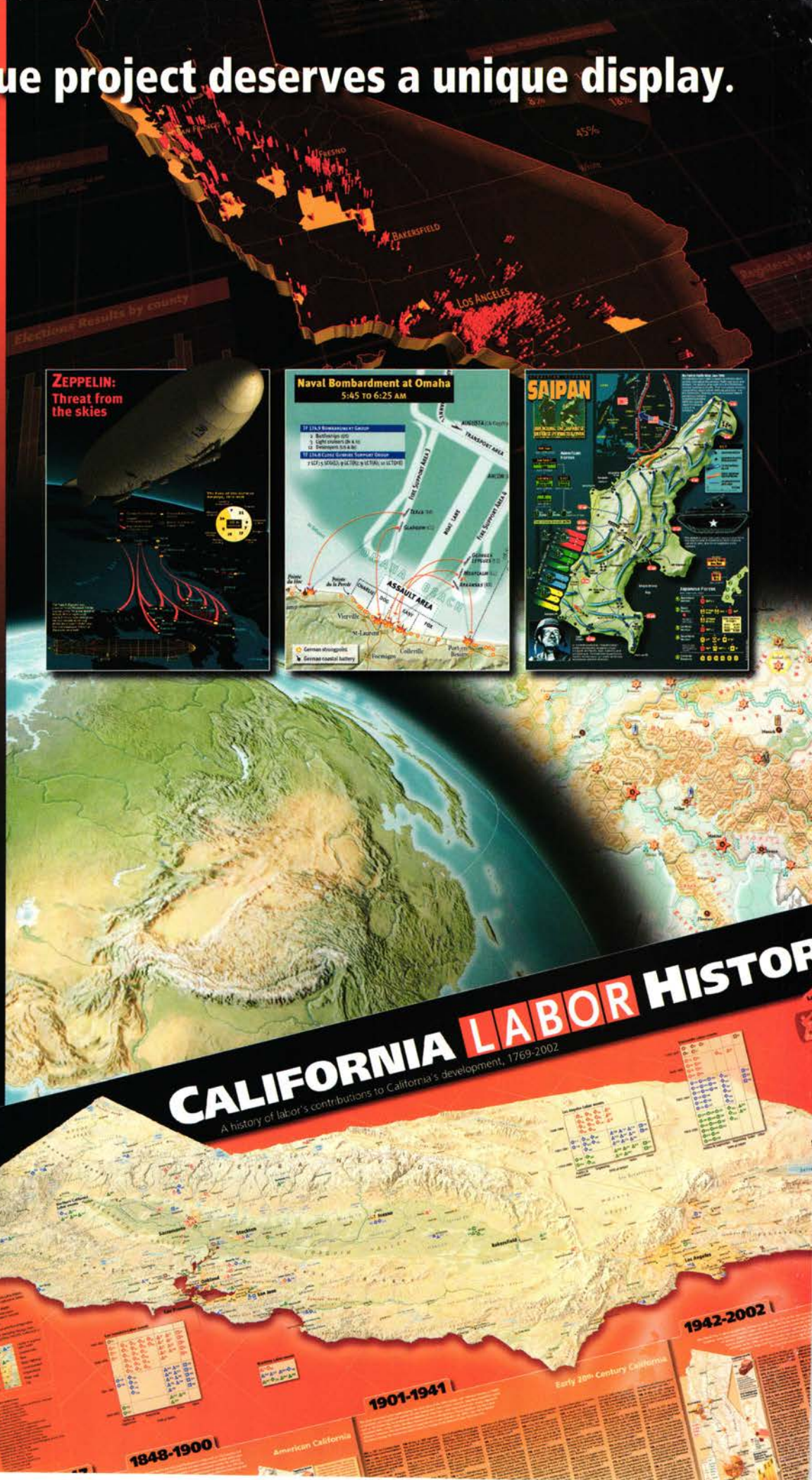


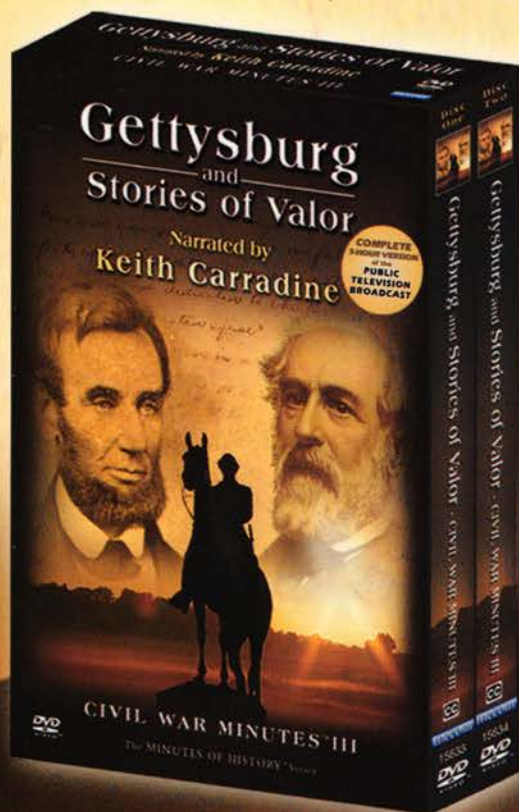
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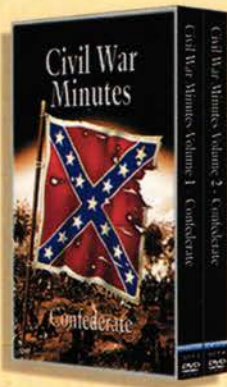
This documentary film is narrated by Keith Carradine (HBO's *Deadwood*) and features the writing and military expertise of Michael Kraus, Military History Advisor for Miramax Films' *Cold Mountain* and Military Coordinator for New Line Cinema's film *Gettysburg*.

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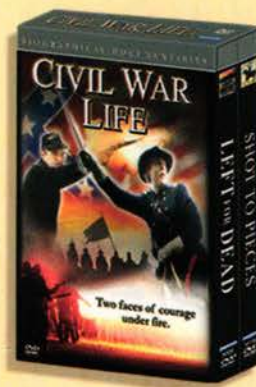
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